ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS (EMF) AND ULTRAVIOLET (UV) REPORT FROM THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES for the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Advisory Committee Meeting on Non-ionizing Radiation on 6-8 June 2023

1. General Research Activities regarding Electromagnetic Health (EMF)

a. Research institutions, such as the University of Santo Tomas and the University of the Philippines continues to produce research in EMF exposure protection and safety across different fields (e.g., environmental, medical, and industrial)

b. The Center for Device Regulation, Radiation Health, and Research of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA-CDRRHR) reviews and considers such research in aid of regulation and policymaking.

2. New Policies in relation to EMF exposure

a. On 20 July 2020, the Department of Health (DOH) issued Administrative Order No. 2020-0035 or the "*Rules and Regulations on the Licensing and Registration of Radiation Facilities Involved in the Use of Radiation Devices and Issuance of Other Related Authorizations*" which establish revised licensing processes for the issuance of authorizations to all radiation facilities, including those for EMF. Important changes include:

   i. Use of Online Portal for the processing of permits and authorizations.
   ii. Use of graded approach principle in the application of regulatory requirements and processes.
   iii. Changed the name of authorization issued to RFR facilities from RFR Safety Evaluation Report to Certificate of Safety Evaluation.
   iv. Established a classification of radiation facilities in the country, including those utilizing non-ionizing radiation.

b. In relation to this, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued FDA Circular No. 2020-021 or the "*Guidelines for the Acceptance of Certificate of Safety Evaluation (CSE) Applications for Radiofrequency Radiation (RFR) Facilities through the FDA RRD Portal*" which streamlined the application process of the issuance of Certificates of Safety Evaluation (CSE) to RFR facilities.

c. The National Government of the Republic of the Philippines, spearheaded by the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), launch the National Effort for Harmonization of Efficient Measures of Interrelated Agencies (NEHEMIA) which was focused on key policies affecting Filipinos such as food, transportation, and communications infrastructure. This culminated with the issuance of the ARTA-DICT-DILG-DHSUD-DPWH-CAAP-DOH-FDA Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 1 s. 2020 or the "Streamlined Guidelines for the Issuance of Permits, Licenses, and Certificates for the Construction of Shared PTTIs" and its 2021 amendment last 1

July 2021, rationalizing all authorizations for the construction of mobile phone base stations. Key provisions include:

i. Identification and classification of active and passive telecommunications infrastructure.
ii. Inclusion of the Department of Health – Food and Drug Administration (DOH-FDA) to the Oversight Committee.
iii. Formal designation of responsibility to the DOH-FDA to resolve and act upon complaints and safety issues regarding radiofrequency radiation exposure in the country.

d. Ongoing efforts to issue the Rules and Regulations in the Operation of Magnetic Resonance Imaging Facilities within the year.

3. Areas of Public Concern and National Response

a. Misinformation and widespread public anxiety in EMF exposure protection and safety. The proliferation of 5G technology and the ramping up of efforts to increase interconnectivity following the COVID-19 pandemic, has also increased public concern in EMF safety.

b. Availability of commercially produced, unreliable, and easily available "EMF Meters" has fed public anxiety towards EMF exposure. Public awareness activities must be exponentially increased to combat misinformation through the use of simple terminologies and avoiding too much technical jargon.

4. New Public Information Activities

a. FDA released Advisory No. 2020-1623 or the "*Safety of Radiofrequency Radiation (RFR) emitted by Cell Sites*" which informed the public the FDA conducts safety evaluation of RFR installations prior to its operation. Additionally, the FDA also highlighted recent studies and issuances of reputable organizations and agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), and the US FDA related to RFR protection and safety.

b. The DOH-FDA also participated in the "*National Orientation on Scaling-up the Telecommunications and Energy Projects & Speed-up the Transport of Goods and Products*" conducted by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) last 5-7 July 2021 to impart efforts by the agency to ensure EMF safety while providing information regarding EMF to the participants for various local government units of the country.

c. FDA also released Advisory No. 2020-2052 entitled, "*Public Health Warning on the Use of Ultraviolet (UV) Emitting Devices*" reminding the public of the dangers of exposure to UV light in line with the increased consumer use of UV devices for

sanitation due to the pandemic situation. FDA reiterated that UV lams for personal use is not recommended by ICNIRP, and the public should instead adhere to established infection control protocols against COVID-19 from the Department of Health (DOH) like proper handwashing, coughing/sneezing etiquette, and social/physical distancing.

d. FDA-CDRRHR continues to accommodate requests to attend as technical experts to public hearings and meetings regarding EMF safety hosted by local government officials and homeowners alike. The office also continues to accept requests for radiation protection and safety evaluations of various areas of concern using CDRRHR's existing and newly acquired EMF meters.

Change in National Contacts

FROM	TO
Agnette P. Peralta, Director **Organization/address:** Center for Device Regulation, Radiation Health, and Research Food and Drug Administration Department of Health Rizal Avenue Sta. Cruz 1003, Manila Republic of the Philippines Tel: +63 2 711 60 16 local 3404 and 3405 Fax: +632 711 6016 Email: apperalta@co.doh.gov.ph Website: http://www.doh.gov.ph	**MARIA CECILIA C. MATIENZO,** Director IV **Organization / Address:** Center for Device Regulation, Radiation Health, and Research Food and Drug Administration Civic Drive, Filinvest Corporate City Alabang, Muntinlupa City 1781 Republic of the Philippines Tel: +63 2 8857 1900 local 8301 Email: cdrrhr@fda.gov.ph Website: https://www.fda.gov.ph/

Prepared by:

MARIA GLADYS R. CABRERA
Division Chief
Radiation Regulation Division
Center for Device Regulation, Radiation Health, and Research

Approved by:

MARIA CECILIA C. MATIENZO
Director IV
Center for Device Regulation, Radiation Health, and Research