

Fertility of Filipino women declining – Popcom

By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

The fertility rate of Filipino women has declined over the last five years from an average of 3.0 in 2013 to 2.7 in 2017, the Commission on Population (PopCom) said yesterday.

Citing the 2017 National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) released yesterday by the Philippine Statistics Authority, PopCom executive director Juan Antonio Perez III said the decline was associated with the increase in the use of modern family planning methods by more than 40 percent of married women.

"This is an unprecedented chance for family planning in the last four years which coincided with the first four to five years of implementation of the Responsible Parenthood Reproductive Health (RPRH) Law," he added.

But Perez noted the decrease would have been more significant had it not been for the temporary restraining order (TRO) issued by the Supreme Court on all contraceptive products, except for condoms, from June 2015 to November 2017.

He also noted that while more women were using oral contraceptive pills and injectables, the Progestin Subdermal Implant (PSI) use was only 1.1 percent.

"The effect of the two-year TRO on implants and contraceptives still rears its head in this survey with lower rates for implants and a less rigorous improvement in the use of oral contraceptives, which were both impacted by the TRO," he said.

PopCom will focus on the poorest 40 percent of Filipinos who have the highest

unmet need for family planning to reach the government's goal of having zero unmet need.

The agency also sees "the need to break new ground among workers, farmers and fisherfolks in urban and rural areas where unmet need in family planning is highest," Perez said.

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