

Announcement of the National Health Commission
on Rules and Procedures for the Health Impact Assessment of Public Policies
B.E. 2564 (A.D. 2021)

Where the implementation of a project or activity that may have severe impacts on the environmental quality, natural resources and health requires a study and impact assessment on the environmental quality and health of people in the community. According to Section 67 Paragraph Two of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550 (A.D.2007) and Section 25 Paragraph One (5) of the National Health Act B.E. 2550 (A.D. 2007) stipulate that it is the duty of the National Health Commission to prescribe rules and procedure for health impact monitoring and assessment of public policies at both the policy and implementation levels. The National Health Commission therefore published the Announcement of the National Health Commission on Rules and Procedures for Health Impact Assessment of Public Policies B.E. 2552 (A.D. 2009) which supported the development of health impact assessments in many aspects. However, the implementation of the Announcement has been undertaken too literally and without proper adaptation to suit different contexts of public policies and geographical areas. Moreover, development projects, activities and social learning processes are changing rapidly. The National Health Commission has thus reviewed and adjusted the criteria and published the Announcement No.2 of the National Health Commission on Rules and Procedures for the Health Impact Assessment of Public Policies B.E. 2559 (A.D. 2016), highlighting the criteria and concepts of health impact assessment that can be applied as a guideline for wider applications by responsible organizations and sectors. However, as time passes, social contexts, laws, government policies and knowledge of international health impact assessments have changed. Therefore, it is essential to re-adjust the rules and procedures of the health impact assessment of public policies to suit changing contexts to ensure that relevant organizations and networks are able to take part in such assessments in ways that best align with their roles and responsibilities.

By virtue of the provision of Section 58 of the 2017 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand and Section 25 Paragraph One (5) of the National Health Act B.E. 2550 (2007), the National Health Commission (NHC) announced as follows:

No.1 The following shall be repealed

(1) Announcement of the National Health Commission on Rules and Procedures for the Health Impact Assessment of Public Policies B.E. 2552 (A.D. 2009) dated November 8, 2009

(2) Announcement No.2 of the National Health Commission on Rules and Procedures for the Health Impact Assessment of Public Policies (No.2) B.E. 2559 (A.D. 2016) dated June 26, 2016

No.2 This announcement shall come into force upon the expiration of 180 days date from the date of its publication in the Government Gazette.

Chapter 1

General Information

No.3 In this announcement,

“Public policies” means direction or guidelines that society at large agree with or believe should be taken accordingly, including policies guided by civil society, citizens, and the government guideline policies which it intends to implement or not to under its powers, duties and responsibilities to solve public problems or to manage any certain issues.

“Public policies at strategic level” means policies, strategies and plans stipulated in policies or stipulated in response to policies of the government, local organizations, private and civil sectors.

“Public policies at implementation level” means projects or activities implemented by government, local organizations, private and civil sectors.

“Public policies for health” means public policies that clearly show concerns about public health with the readiness to take responsibility for health impacts that may arise from such policies. At the same time, these public policies aim to promote social and physical environments conducive to a healthy lifestyle and to provide the people with choices and accessibility to choices that bring about a healthy living.

“Health Impact Assessment” (HIA) means anticipation or assessment of both negative and positive including fairness from impacts on people’s health that may be caused by public policies. The assessment process shall involve applications of vary tools and having appropriate public participation process, in order to support and to present to organizations and authorities involved in making decisions for benefiting the people’s wellbeing both in the short and long terms.

“Social Determinants of Health (SDH)” are the environments in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, as well as the conditions that shape the environments such as economic policies and systems, social development direction, social norms, social policies and political systems that affect quality of life and health of the population.

“Participation” means the act whereby people, communities, private sectors, civil societies, state organizations, local administrations and professional organizations take part in all processes and activities of health impact assessments in the form of information sharing, brainstorming, and planning, decision making, operating, take responsibility, gain benefits, and follow-up assessment and monitoring.

“Committee on System and Mechanism Development of Health Impact Assessment” means the committee appointed by the National Health Commission to promote development of the system,

mechanisms and procedure of health impact assessments from public policies and to undertake other relevant tasks.

“Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment” means a committee appointed by the organization making public policies or other organization desire to perform health impact assessment to supervise and to ensure the accuracy and suitability of the health impact assessment.

No.4 In order ensure that health impact assessment follows the intent of the National Health Act B.E. 2550 (2007) as propounded in Chapter on Rights and Duties in respect to Health, the following principles shall be adhered to:

(1) Democracy: HIA shall guarantee and promote the rights of the people to participate in the development of public policies that may impact on their health and wellbeing.

(2) Equity: HIA should lessen health inequality through studies and analyses of health impacts that may occur to each community and group of people.

(3) Ethical use of evidence: HIA should be based on empirical data and reasoning from multidisciplinary approaches and methods both qualitatively and quantitatively. Accurate data and evidence must be specified and used in the best possible manner.

(4) Practicality: the HIA shall be designed to suit the right timing and right resources available. Recommendations from the HIA should result in mobilizing resources and collaboration when possible and appropriate.

(5) Collaboration: HIA shall promote collaboration among different agencies and various social sectors to encourage development of public health policies.

(6) Holistic wellbeing: HIA shall multidimensional integrate social and environmental factors that affect or may impact people and the communities’ health.

(7) Sustainability: HIA shall aim for sustainable development and focus on preventive precautionary principle as key elements of a healthy society for preventing of negative impacts and promote positive impacts that may occur on people’s health.

Chapter 2

Health Impact Assessment Guidelines

No.5 Government organizations and other social sectors that have responsibility for assessing health impacts may apply the health impact assessment to policies, strategies, plans, projects or activities that promote wellbeing or that might cause negative health impacts, at the local community, provincial, regional, national or international levels.

No.6 HIA can be applied in public policy process at two levels:

(1) HIA formulated by public policies at the strategic level: the assessment should be undertaken on crucial dimensions including holistic health policies, strategies, and action plans, as well as financial measures that have impacts on health and the environment, society, energy, agriculture, transport, mining, industry, city planning, land use, and others as specified by the National Health Commission.

(2) HIA formulated by Public policies at the implementation level can be apply in two ways:

(2.1) HIA is conducted on projects/activities that require a health impact assessment by law or application or feasibility studies of projects or activities prior to implementation.

(2.2) HIA is conducted on projects or activities that do not require a health impact assessment by law prior to implementation.

No. 7 Application of HIA can be approached in two ways:

(1) Application based on duration of implementation process of a public policy, can be operated in two ways:

(1.1) Prospective HIA

(1.2) Concurrent HIA

(2) Application based on scale and duration of HIA can be operated in 3 ways , as follows:

(2.1) Rapid HIA

(2.2) Intermediate HIA

(2.3) Comprehensive HIA

The application of HIP guideline is specified in the Appendix 1

No. 8 The process and procedure of HIA may comprise six stages, to be implemented for the best interests of all stakeholders:

(1) Screening: filtering whether a policy, strategy, project/activity is subject to HIA by taking into consideration of severity, magnitude of impacts and consequences on the people, the vulnerable, the disadvantaged, or any other group at risk, etc.

(2) Scoping: setting boundaries, geographical areas, targeted population, duration, and scope of problems and potential impacts.

(3) Assessing health impact is an assessment according to the scope in scoping process by analyzing both positive and negative to define recommendations for solving and improving health effect.. Including drafting reports and recommendations for improving operations of policies, strategies, projects or activities to promote health and reduce risk factors affecting health.

(4) Reviewing: stakeholders are provided with opportunities to review HIA reports, as well as draw conclusions and make recommendations to adjust and finalize the draft reports.

(5) Influencing: HIA findings are presented to relevant parties, as are solutions to implement policies, strategies, plans, projects/activities as suggested in the recommendations.

(6) Monitoring and Evaluation: to evaluate how successful the process of carrying out HIA has been in preventing and solving health impacts, whether or not positive and negative health impacts occurred as estimated in the HIA report, and how the impacts have affected the population. The evaluation is useful in revising or improving relevant implementation/measures.

No. 9 In assessing health impacts, key factors that need to be taken into consideration include environmental and cultural factors that may have potential impacts on community health. In the process of designing HIA scopes and guidelines, the following crucial issues covering both positive and negative aspects should be incorporated:

(1) Changes on conditions and use of natural resources: data should be collected prior to policy implementation for data management and impact monitoring

(2) Changes and impacts on occupation, employment and local work conditions

(3) Changes and impacts on relationships of the population, and intra- and inter-communities

(4) Changes on strategic areas and cultural heritage areas

(5) Impacts on production, transportation, and storage of hazardous materials

(6) Occurrence and emission of pollutants and health-threatening risks from construction, manufacturing and other processes with potential health impacts

(7) Exposure to pollution and health threats of people in community.

(8) Specific or severe impacts on population groups, especially the vulnerable such as children, the disabled, pregnant women, the elderly, single parents and minority groups.

(9) Resources and preparedness of the public health sector in promoting, protecting and reviving the health of the population that may relate to policy, strategy, plan, project or activity, including

preparedness of a health database of the area prior to policy implementation for data management and impact monitoring

(10) Other issues specified by the National Health Commission according to the suggestion of the Committee on System and Mechanism Development of Health Impact Assessment. The assessor should analyze and provide information concerning changes that relates to his/her implementation only.

Chapter 3

Rules and Procedures of Health Impact Assessment

No. 10 In cases where a Health Impact Assessment at both the strategic or implementation levels is required by a regulation or law, with a feasibility study or a report of practices prior to implementation, the HIA must be carried out according to such regulation or law. However, the HIA must not affect the rights of individuals or groups of people who request the HIA, in accordance with Section 11 of the National Health Act B.E. 2550 (A.D.2007).

No. 11 In cases where a Health Impact Assessment of public policies at both the strategic or at implementation levels is not required by a regulation or law, prior to the implementation, the agency that owns the said public policy shall process as follows:

(1) The agency that owns the public policy shall collect data from the Health Impact Assessment Screening Form, as specified in Appendix 2. If it is concluded that the HIA should be carried out, a HIA Steering Committee must be set up to act in compliance with the HIA Guideline as described in Appendix 4 and to complete HIA report, comprising types and the key elements as specified in Appendix 5. The elements of the HIA Report and the authority of the HIA Steering Committee shall be in line with the description in Appendix 3.

(2) Once the agency mentioned in No. 11 (1) has received the completed HIA Report and decided to implement the public policy that may have potential health impacts on communities, an action plan on health impacts prevention, solutions, monitoring and evaluation, the implementation plan of the public policy with a timeframe, progress reports of implementation every six months at the minimum, as well as a public announcement prior to implementation, must be carried out so that the general public can monitor the implementation as deemed appropriate.

No. 12 A local administrative organization may act in accordance with No. 10 or 11 of the HIA Guidelines as deemed appropriate to support the implementation for the following purposes:

(1) To produce information and a proposal of a local/community/public policy development plan that is derived from participation of the people, shareholders and relevant parties.

(2) To produce information and a proposal of local legislation, action plans on environmental health and occupational health, and HIA of environmental pollution.

(3) To present information and a proposal to be used for making decisions and support implementation in accordance with relevant laws.

No. 13 In the case where an individual or a group of people applying for HIA in accordance with Section 11 of the National Health Act B.E. 2550 (A.D.2007), the process shall be as follows:

(1) The individual or the group of people applying for HIA shall prepare documents required in the HIA Application Form, as specified in Appendix 6 and submit the form to the organization responsible for the public policy, or the organization responsible for HIA, or the organization with approval authority or the office of the National Health Commission for coordination and submission of the documents/proposals for the operation of relevant organizations.

(2) The organization who receives the form mentioned in No. 13 (1) above, shall collect documents for screening based on the HIA Screening Form as specified in Appendix 2 to evaluate the rationale, necessity and suitability of HIA, and inform the consideration result with reasons to HIA applicants within 45 days of receiving the documents. If the organization cannot manage to do this within the timeframe specified, the timeframe can be extended but no more than 45 days and a notification letter shall be sent to inform the applicant.

(3) In case of screening result mentioned in No. 13 (2) above showing the necessity to conduct the HIA, the organization mentioned in No. 13 (1) shall conduct the HIA prior to implementation of the public policy/project based on the HIA Guidelines specified in No. 10 or 11 as deemed appropriate. In a case where the HIA is to be conducted during the implementation of a public policy, the guidelines in Appendix 4 shall be applied.

(4) The National Health Commission shall play a role in coordinating, monitoring progress and problems/obstacles, and proposing periodic progress reports to the Committee on System and Mechanism Development of Health Impact Assessments in order to find solutions to problems and to support implementation. Progress reports shall be submitted to the National Health Commission at least once a year.

No. 14 In cases where an individual, or groups of people, academia, educational institutions, networks, or any organization wish to use the HIA as a tool in supporting development of a public policy for health or in creating a social learning process, the HIA with the principles specified in No. 4 shall be applied and consider implementing the HIA guidelines and procedures specified in No. 7, 8 and 9 as deemed appropriate to match the learning process.

Chapter 4

Supporting and Follow-up Evaluating

No.15 The National Health Commission shall provide advice and support to people who apply for HIA, relevant organizations, and networks. It shall encourage development of academic networks as tools in building knowledge, developing implementation guidelines, and enhancing health impact assessment capacity among network members.

The HIA shall be followed up and evaluated once every five years for revision and further improvement.

No.16 When receiving recommendations, or complaints relating to conducting HIA based on the rules and procedures specified in this notification, the Committee on System and Mechanism Development of Health Impact Assessments may conduct research to find out facts, and problems/obstacles, or set up a working team to do such task and collaborate with relevant organizations to solve the problems. Proposals can be presented to the National Health Commission as deemed appropriate.

Announced on 19 October 2021

(Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul)

Deputy Prime Minister

Chairman of National Health Commission

Appendix 1

Health Impact Assessment Application Guidelines

A Health Impact Assessment for the wellbeing of the population based on participation and social learning can be applied through two approaches: first, the application based on duration of the implementation process of a policy, a plan, a project or an activity and secondly, the application based on scale and duration of the HIA, as follows:

1) HIA based on duration of the implementation process of a policy, , a plan, a project or an activity in different levels which can be done in two ways:

(1.1) Prospective HIA is carried out prior to the start of a policy/project. This type of HIA enables adjustment of the policy proposal, or draft of the policy prior to implementation to maximize positive impacts and minimize negative impacts. Prospective HIA is the main type of HIA, which encourages screening and recommendations on proposals, projects or activities considered necessary of HIA, to provide opportunities for all parties involved to raise issues, conduct research, and share ideas in order to co-design and co-plan the HIA.

(1.2) Concurrent HIA is carried out alongside the implementation of a policy or project, with an aim to encourage learning, reviewing and changing implementation methods as quickly as possible once an approach is seen as having negative health impacts. For a concurrent HIA to be successful, collaboration among all parties involved is needed, in particular the policy maker, the people who are likely to be affected and those who carry out the assessment. Collaboration will link assessment outcomes and recommendations from the HIA with the decision-making process for greater efficiency in implementation of the public policy or for the development of measures to prevent unexpected negative impacts of the public policy. When conflicts or complaints arise, it is necessary for all parties to equally take part in designing the implementation process and mechanism, assessing health impacts, discussing and making decisions based on empirical data so as to reach a mutual agreement.

2) Application based on scale and duration of assessment can be carried out in three different ways:

(2.1) A Rapid HIA is usually conducted on smaller and less complex policies or projects or where urgent outcomes are needed for immediate decision making. Rapid HIA may be completed in a short time and generally involve literature reviews and rely mainly on existing data/evidence and information from past HIA of a similar policy or project.

(2.2) An Intermediate HIA has more details of assessment and takes longer to complete than a rapid HIA. It involves issues which are not very complicated, requires moderate resources but has limited timing for finding outcomes for decision making. Data used in this type of HIA are mainly drawn from:

- (a) Knowledge and inputs from stakeholders and experts in different fields
- (b) Literature reviews, and existing academic evidences
- (c) Reviews of HIAs of similar projects
- (d) Collection of additional information and research on specific issues that may include a long-term monitoring system and data collecting.

(2.3) A Comprehensive HIA is usually conducted on a large-scale, long-term policy or project with a wide magnitude of potential impacts on the population, extensive resources and no urgency in decision making. Generally, comprehensive HIAs require a large number of resources and time. Data or evidence used in this type of HIA are in line with those used in Intermediate HIAs, albeit in greater depth and using more resources and time.

Appendix 2
Health Impact Assessment Screening Form¹

Part 1. Basic Information about the Policy/Project

Information about Policy/Project	Details
1.1 Policy/Project Name	
1.2 Policy/Project Owner	
1.3 Location	
1.4 Policy/Project Details	
1.5 Policy/Project Processes	
1.6 Approval Processes	
1.7 Stakeholders	

Part 2. Topics of Potential Impacts to be Examined

Topics of Potential Impacts to be Examined	Initial Assessment/ Predicted Impacts			Description
	Yes	No	Likely	
2.1 Implementation of the policy/project/activity has more than one factor that may cause negative impact.				
2.2 Whether and how tthe policy/project/activity may cause severe potential negative impacts on health of the population, community or stakeholders.				

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¹This Health Impact Assessment Screening Form aims to discover whether or not the policy/project/activity based on the Rules and Procedures of Health Impact Assessment in No. 11 and 13 will lead to potential negative impacts on the community and stakeholders and requires a Health Impact Assessment. This is to ensure that the preventive measures and solutions encompass all dimensions by involving people’s participation in the Health Impact Assessment to bring about social learning process and to include other objectives of HIA as specified in the Rules in No. 14.

Topics of Potential Impacts to be Examined	Initial Assessment/ Predicted Impacts			Description
	Yes	No	Likely	
2.3 Whether and how the policy/project/activity may cause potential negative impacts on the underprivileged. ²				
2.4 Community or stakeholders' concerns on health impacts by complaint to relevant organizations or publicized on public media or community forums.				
2.5 There was an individuals or groups of people requesting the HIA, in accordance with Section 11 of the National Health Act B.E. 2550 (A.D.2007)				

Remark: If the total number of answers “yes” or “likely” from 3 topics or more, it can be concluded that the Health Impact Assessment is required.

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² “The underprivileged” refers to those deprived through social or economic conditions, including education, health, politics, laws, culture, natural disasters and wars. The underprivileged include those lacking access to basic state welfare and those lacking support from an organization to enjoy an equal standard of living.

Part 3. Checklist to Determine Proper Types of HIA

Topics to be Examined	The Proper Type of HIA			Remark
	Comprehensive HIA	Intermediate HIA	Rapid HIA	
3.1 Information, evidence, past experiences or impact assessment that can be used in stipulating preventive measures	Scarce	Medium	Plenty	If information useful for HIA is scarce, a comprehensive study must be conducted to collect adequate information.
3.2 Duration of HIA to identify health impacts and to prepare measures in order to lessen negative impacts.	Plenty	Medium	Scarce	If the time is short, a Rapid HIA is required. When there is plenty of time, a Comprehensive HIA can be conducted.
3.3 How much budget does the responsible organization have for conducting HIA?	Plenty	Medium	Scarce	A Comprehensive HIA requires more budget than other types of HIA.

Part 4. Conclusion of types of HIA chosen and possibility of conducting HIA (using information from Part 2 and Part 3)

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Part 5. Further plans

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Appendix 3

Elements, Duties and Authorities of the Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment

]The Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment is set up through the collaboration of the organization that conducts the Health Impact Assessment and those involved with the public policy, especially the people in the communities who are potentially affected by the public policy. The elements, duties and authorities of the Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment are as follows:

1. Elements:

- (1) A chairman of the committee appointed from experts in relevant fields.
- (2) No fewer than 5 and no more than 9 committee members, at least one third of the committee must be representatives of the people or the civil society that are likely to suffer negative health impacts.
- (3) The members of the Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment must not be a consultant or staff or employee of the organization responsible for the HIA and have no personal interests from the public policy.
- (4) A secretary and an assistant secretary of the Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment are appointed by the organization operating the HIA as deemed appropriate.

2. Duties and authorities

- (1) Supervise and specify scope of the HIA.
- (2) Follow up progress and provide suggestions on implementation of the Health Impact Assessment of the public policy.
- (3) Validate the draft of the HIA report.
- (4) Organize meetings among stakeholders and the general public who are interested in the review of the draft of the HIA report, prepare summaries of comments of stakeholders and the general public, including opinions/clarifications of the Steering Committee on HIA, and summaries of HIA outcomes to be included in the full HIA report and distribute these to the organization for further consideration.

For that purpose, the working fees for the chairman and committee members shall be designated in compliance with relevant regulations of the organizations.

Appendix 4

Guidelines for Health Impact Assessment of Public Policy

The Health Impact Assessment of Public Policy both at strategic and implementation levels shall be carried out in line with the following guidelines:

(1) The organization responsible for the HIA shall collaborate with parties involved in the public policy, in particular the people and the communities likely to be affected by the public policy, in order to set up the Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment that is accepted by all parties involved.

(2) After the setting up of the Steering Committee on Health Impact Assessment, the organization in Item (1) shall hold a stakeholder meeting to set the scope and guidelines for the HIA (scoping) under the supervision of the HIA Steering Committee.

(3) The organization in Item (1) shall conduct the HIA or find a contractor to conduct the HIA, and to analyze health impacts in all dimensions within the scope and guidelines specified in Item (2). For the analysis, HIA progress reports shall be periodically submitted to the HIA Steering Committee. When the HIA Steering Committee agrees that the draft of the HIA report is complete, a meeting for any revisions to the draft HIA report shall be held to invite comments on preventive measures and solutions and to check the completeness and accuracy of the HIA report with the support of the organization in Item (1). In addition, a summary of opinions of stakeholders and the general public, as well as the opinions and clarification of the HIA Steering Committee shall be included in the full HIA report prior to distribution to the organization mentioned in Item (1) for further consideration.

(4) Once the implementation of the HIA has been completed, the organization mentioned in Item (1) shall send the report of the HIA outcome to the National Health Commission.

Appendix 5

Types and Key Elements of Health Impact Assessment Report

In preparing the HIA report, updated information of the policy, plan, project or activity shall be used and, at a minimum, the following key elements shall be included:

- 1) Introduction, showing rationale, objectives/necessities, scope and methods of the assessment.
- 2) Details of the public policy or project
- 3) Current situations, including relevant natural resources, local communities and the society, along with information on the public hearings.
- 4) The HIA specifying information about potential impacts on the population and communities, including the factors that may cause potential health impacts specified in No. 9
- 5) Health impact reduction and prevention measures
- 6) Strategies for follow-up of the impacts and impact reduction measures
- 7) Compensation measures in case the impacts are inevitable.
- 8) Other attached documents at the end of HIA report should be references of academic information, reports of data collection, pictures, and appendices on determination of samplings, forms or questionnaires, etc.

Appendix 6

Application Form for Health Impact Assessment of Public Policy

In compliance with Section 11 of the National Health Act B.E. 2550 (A.D.2007)

Part 1. Information of the Applicant

- 1.1 Name - Family Name.....
ID No.
- 1.2 Contact Address.....
- 1.3 Telephone No.....
- 1.4 Email address.....
- 1.5 Other contact channels.....
- 1.6 Names of relevant parties/supporters of application (if any) in form of attached documents

Part 2. Information about the Public Policy/Project

Information about the public policy	Details of the policy
2.1 Title of the public policy	
2.2 Organization responsible for the public policy	
2.3 Location and area affected by the policy implementation	
2.4 Details of the public policy	
2.5 Groups of stakeholders	
2.6 References of the information of the public policy	
2.7 Information on Health Impact Assessment or on-going assessment of other types of impacts (if any)	

Part 3. Topics of Potential Impacts to be Examined, as specified in Part 2.

Topics to be Examined	Yes	No	Likely	Description
3.1 The public policy may cause one or more factors that result in changes to health				
3.2 The public policy may cause severe negative impacts.				
3.3 The public policy may have negative impacts on the underprivileged. ³				
3.4 People in the community are worried about health impacts of the public policy.				
3.5 There is existing information, evidence, experience or impact assessments on the implementation of similar policies.				
3.6 Measures to lessen potential negative impacts have been specified in the public policy.				

Part 4. Recommendations on implementation and participation in Health Impact Assessment

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³“The underprivileged” refers to those deprived through social or economic conditions, including education, health, politics, laws, culture, natural disasters and wars. The underprivileged includes those lacking access to state basic welfare and those lacking support from an organization to enjoy equal standard of living.