



UNITED NATIONS
PHILIPPINES



The Development Pitch 3.0





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Foreword

The Development Pitch, first launched in 2020, is a compilation of think pieces on sustainable development by United Nations leaders in the Philippines.

Their contributions outline the current state of affairs in their area of work and expertise, and what still needs to be done – focusing on immediate priority and high impact interventions – to make our vision of a better future for all a reality.

The first two editions reflected the UN Country Team's pandemic interventions and support for economic and social recovery.

This third installment, which comes at the midpoint to our 2030 deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), focuses on actions to accelerate progress towards our development targets.

These will be key for implementation in the forthcoming and first new generation Philippines 2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – the key strategic document that will guide the work of all UN development system entities in their joint endeavor to support the country on its path to sustainable development and the achievement of SDGs.

Featuring work from ILO, FAO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNFPA, UN Habitat, and UN Women, Development Pitch 3.0 underscores the need to forge and strengthen multi-sectoral collaborations because the crises we are currently facing far exceed the response capacities of any single actor.

It is only through partnerships that critical policies and investments can be made within this window of opportunity that we have now to save the SDGs and ensure that no one is left behind.



A stylized, handwritten-style signature logo in white, consisting of the letters 'G' and 'G' intertwined, with a horizontal line underneath.

Gustavo González
UN Resident Coordinator



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



Tamara Palis-Duran
FAO Assistant Representative

The agriculture sector can propel the recovery of the Philippine economy, but compounding challenges are many, from technical issues on

productivity and competitiveness, to institutional issues that constrain efficiency.

The impacts of the Ukraine crisis have exacerbated the problem, with prices of key agricultural inputs soaring to an all-time high while wages and earnings remain stagnant.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has also called attention to impending export bans of agri-food trade partners which may adversely affect local food security.

Thus, the prioritization of the sector by the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is a welcome development. President Marcos has noted two of the most pressing matters that he will look into:

- ① Improve the country's rice industry, such as increasing local rice production to address consumer prices and reduce dependence on importation.
- ② Reorganizing the DA, to make it more responsive to the global situation in support of the food security objective.

The road to food security and agricultural development calls for a multi-sectoral approach, which the UN is best placed to support, especially as we work towards our new cooperation framework.

The enhancement of registry systems and sectoral databases for fair and efficient targeting can assist sectors affected by the looming food crisis. The intention to “reform or restructure” the DA provides strategic entry points to introduce good practices and innovations that will help bring forward the competitiveness of the sector.

The FAO advocates a One-UN that pushes for transformative policies, sustainability, and scalability in support of resilient, sustainable and inclusive agriculture and food systems.



International Labour Organization (ILO)



Khalid Hassan
ILO Country Director

The United Nations (UN) team in the Philippines must look into the interconnectedness between trade agreements, human rights, and labor rights. The Philippines has ratified nine out of 10 core ILO conventions and the ILO has been supporting tripartite constituents and social partners in fulfilling their commitments and addressing concerns as regards the application of ratified Conventions.

- In January 2023, the Philippines received the **High-Level Tripartite Mission (HLTM)** considering the concerns on the application by the Philippines of the Freedom of Association (FOA) and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

During the ILO Director-General (DG)'s mission to the Philippines in June 2023, the Philippines' position

on the global trade network was highlighted, and how the non-compliance to labor and human rights may affect the country's position on the global value chain.

Looking into how the UN can support increased compliance and elevate the country's position in the global value chain was one of the objectives of the DG's mission.

The Philippine Government has taken measures to address outstanding issues and concerns on labor rights violations to promote an enabling environment for the effective exercise of freedom of association and the right to organize.

A tripartite roadmap on **Freedom of Association** is expected by 1 September 2023, responding to strategic points of action from the HLTM recommendations.

The support to the implementation of the FOA roadmap is one area and entry point for greater UN collaboration.

The Indo-Pacific economic framework (IPAS), the EU GSP Plus, and the UN have strong labor and environmental standards to be implemented.

I encourage the UN team to explore the creation of a joint program focusing on the same, and to establish a pillar specifically for labor rights.

This would help with our efforts to achieve joint positions and all the UN agencies can work together in addressing both trade and development issues.

I also enjoin UN agencies to support greater social dialogue among all our stakeholders in order to make progress on outstanding issues as well as to make decent work and social justice a reality for all.



Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)



Dr. Louie Ocampo
UNAIDS Country Director

The Philippines has the fastest-growing HIV epidemic in the Asia and Pacific region, with a record of 400 percent increase from 2010 to 2021. The country has been lagging in all the **95 targets** laid down in the new **Global AIDS Strategy**: 95 percent of people living with HIV know their status, 95 percent of diagnosed are on life-saving treatment, and 95 percent on treatment are virally suppressed.

The facts are disconcerting, but in reality, we have long known about this—in the news, on the internet, and in our everyday lives, the numbers have become all too familiar. We know friends and strangers alike who have fallen like dominos in the face of both the physical and societal horrors of untreated HIV and AIDS. This, despite a national law on AIDS having been passed in 2018, and

despite the innumerable efforts from all sectors to suppress the threat of this disease.

The **2023 Global AIDS Update - The Path that Ends AIDS** - shows that there is a path to end AIDS. But it likewise provides that the end of the epidemic is conditioned on critical considerations: a robust political leadership and policymaking that follows the evidence, integrates HIV care into health systems, and respects human rights.

The recently developed **AIDS Medium Term Plan** has also laid down the path towards ending AIDS, proving once more that our efforts will not be for naught.

Why, then, would ending the HIV epidemic remain an uncertainty? The answer will be a pill hard to swallow, but one we must do nonetheless: Our efforts, though by all means laudable, are still not enough. To end the HIV epidemic, we must do more.

- That involves tackling the inequalities and discriminatory

laws that hold back our progress, pursuing gender equality, empowering communities and civil society organizations in their vital roles in HIV response, and finally, ensuring sufficient and sustainable funding.

- Indeed, we must fast-track our HIV response by renewing our commitment to sustain funding for and scale-up of HIV prevention programs. For this to come true, it will not only be the UNAIDS that moves.
- Operationalizing the AIDS Medium Term Plan demands multisectoral collaborations. The UN system—through the UN Joint Team on AIDS, which includes UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC, UNDP, WHO, and the UNAIDS Secretariat—is best placed to provide technical guidance and financial support and ensure that all strategies and innovations are expanded at a national scale.

The division of labor among co-sponsors is an arrangement to ensure that all areas in HIV programming are adequately covered.

That includes policy reform, sustainable financing, stigma and discrimination reduction, and addressing barriers to access HIV services.

Hence, I call for our co-sponsors to move along with the government's direction in prioritizing HIV through increased investments in the expansion of delivery of HIV services.

I call on the UN Joint Team on AIDS to maximize engagements with the government to incorporate innovative strategies not only on health but also non-health interventions.

The battle to finally quell the threat of the epidemic cannot be done in isolation.

We need the consolidated action of everyone:

- the political commitment and leadership of the government,
- the competency and compassion of health providers,

- the love and support of family and friends,
- the renewed and strong activism of the advocates and civil society groups, and of course,
- our co-sponsors.

Everyone must do their part, veering away from complacency and toward closing the gaps, breaking all access barriers, and righting all injustices.

There is a path to end this—a path that will ensure that we are prepared to address our collective challenges and advance toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The data and our individual narratives serve as lampposts for us to walk towards this path, and indeed some leaders have begun to do so—and are succeeding. The certainty of victory presents us with a choice: do we walk towards that path, or will we stand idly by?

The choice is not difficult, and I trust that we are all headed in the same direction.



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)



Ma. Rosalyn "Lenlen" Mesina

UN Women Country Programme Coordinator

This year, 2022, the Philippines further slipped in the global gender equality index, **ranking 19th** – its lowest performance since

the World Economic Forum (WEF) started reporting on gender equality in 2006.

Women continue to be underrepresented in parliaments, critical ministries, the police force, in business and private sector top management roles, with numbers far from meeting the minimum figure of 30 percent—the threshold at which transformative difference can be expected to take place. We still see a wide gap in women’s labor force participation. They often take on vulnerable work here and abroad and receive unequal pay for equal work or value.

They continue to be highly vulnerable to gender-based violence and suffer disproportionately in conflict areas as well as in communities that are vulnerable to various disasters and humanitarian crises.

This suffering became more apparent during the pandemic and the recent calamities -- and is expected to continue even during recovery.

Beyond the challenges, risks, and vulnerabilities that they face, women continue to play significant roles across the different economic, social, cultural, and political spheres as

caregivers, workers, frontliners, first responders, organizers, leaders, and peacebuilders, among many other roles and tasks.

When given an enabling and empowering environment, we know that women will be able to realize their fullest potential and transform lives and communities towards an inclusive, progressive, resilient, and sustainable Philippines.

This is where UN Women would like to make a difference.

As a programme presence office in the country, we have limited access to local and global resources that will allow us to make a bigger impact in the lives of women and girls. This is where the UN Country Team (UNCT) can play a big role.

Through joint programming, collaboration, and partnerships, we know we can address barriers and open pathways for women so we can deliver, create, and have deeper and more meaningful impact on their lives and communities where they serve and belong. We know that this can translate to building sustainable and resilient communities in the long run.



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)



Jonathan Gilman

Regional Development Coordinator

Climate Summit

On 20 September 2023, the UN Secretary-General will convene a Climate Ambition Summit to

accelerate the pace and scale of a just transition to a renewable-energy based, climate-resilient global economy.

Four thematic issues

The Summit will have four key thematic sessions, as follows:

① **Credibility of net zero.** This session will provide a platform for presentation of good practices from businesses, financial institutions, and cities and regions to demonstrate progress on delivering on their net-zero pledges by developing and implementing credible, accountable transition plans.

② **Delivering climate justice.** This session will tackle the Early Warnings for All (EW4ALL) Initiative, which aims to ensure that every person on earth is protected by an early warning system by 2027. The Adaptation Pipeline Accelerator (APA) will also be an important agenda item for this session.

The APA aims to pioneer a new model of coordination among recipient governments, development partners and other public and private financiers, around the adaptation financing for developing countries.

③ **Accelerating decarbonization.** This session will address industrial decarbonization; battery storage; critical energy transition materials/ rare earth minerals.

④ **The Loss and Damage Fund.** This session, which will be participated in by heads of international financial institutions (IFIs), will discuss the following:

Who will host the Loss and Damage Fund? Will it be the Global Climate Fund (GCF), the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), or a new institution?

What will be the focus of the Fund? Some countries have called for a specific focus for the fund e.g. a focus on long onset climate change impacts, such as sea level rise, desertification, etc.

Some countries have recommended that the Fund focuses on Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). However, countries like

Pakistan and the Philippines, which are middle-income, are nonetheless highly vulnerable to climate change.

A Task Team will present the broad outline of the Loss and Damage Fund at the 28th Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in November 2023.

What will success look like from the summit: Four key issues

- The success of the Climate Ambition Summit will hinge on answers to four key issues, as follows:
- Will there be any commitments to enhancing member states' existing nationally determined contributions

(NDCs) and to pledge that their next NDCs, expected by 2025, will be more ambitious?

- Will there be any progress announcement that the USD100 billion per year goal for climate financing set in 2009 will indeed be met this year?
- Will there be any movement on shifting from coal phase down to phase out?

Will there be any consensus or funding commitments around the Loss and Damage Fund?



United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)



Christopher Rollo
Country Programme Manager

Did you know that with the fast rate of urbanization, **70 percent** of the infrastructure that we will see in 2050 is still to be built?

Rapid urbanization is fueling the infrastructure needs of cities.

This global estimate applies to the Philippines where approximately **half of the population lives in urban areas** and the rate of urbanization is among the highest in the world at more than two percent annually.


This infrastructure—roads, bridges, public buildings, private developments, public open spaces—will dictate the way we live for decades and even centuries after they are built. While we face a huge investment gap, we also face a big opportunity and responsibility to shape and build our future now, through proper planning, design and implementation—one building, one space at a time.

The current administration has targeted to construct **six million houses - one million per year** for the next six years-- under the

Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino Program (National Housing for the Filipino Program).

This is a tall order considering that the housing department, through all its housing assistance programs, has historically been able to build fewer than 200,000 houses per year. This will have profound implications in terms of social inclusion, environment and economy. We know that slums and informal settlements perennially suffer from chronic underinvestment in infrastructure and basic services, which in turn entrenches poverty, exacerbates vulnerabilities and limits opportunities.

The ambitious housing program, if successful, will have tremendous positive impacts on building



resilience in “urban weak spots,” especially informal settlements and urban poor communities, if it can ensure that people will not be displaced in compact cities and communities and will have better access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. Good urban planning and governance will have to address:

- urban sprawl,
- environmental degradation; and
- other urban challenges.

At the same time, as cities grow, there is increased pressure to build on available land for urban uses. In the Philippines, there is no legislated allocation for public open spaces except for subdivisions which are required to allocate 30 percent of total area for public open spaces--

way below the global standard of 50 percent. Public open spaces are often sacrificed as we see barangay halls and other public facilities built on remaining open spaces while sidewalks are overrun by public and private users.

It is important to provide for public open spaces because they can serve as nature-based solutions for disaster risk management as well as spaces for social interaction, economic activities and political expression. Public spaces are a step towards achieving spatial justice. They are social equalizers--where people from all walks of life meet as equals.

UN-Habitat remains committed to leave no one and no place behind.




United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)



Christopher Rollo
Country Programme Manager

An increasing number of indigenous peoples (IPs) have been migrating to cities due to a variety of factors, such as

displacement from ancestral lands, poverty, political instability and conflict, climate change, etc.



The situation of IPs in urban areas varies greatly. While some can adapt and improve their living conditions without loss of cultural identity, many are subject to discrimination, exclusion, and violence.

More than **86 percent** of IPs work in the informal economy and are nearly three times as likely to live in extreme poverty. They are more likely to suffer from malnutrition, and often lack adequate social protection and economic resources. This is the case of the Badjaos in Surigao City in Mindanao.

Among the IPs, the Badjaos are among the most marginalized. Because of their nomadic nature, they do not have security of livelihoods, adequate housing and supportive community networks outside of their own group. Their communities, usually composed of houses on stilts, lack basic water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management systems. Because of

their lack of education and the discriminatory conditions under which they live, parents have very limited access to good sources of income. Many resort to begging in the streets, usually with children in tow.

After Typhoon Odette struck in December 2021, around 100 Badjao families living in Surigao City were displaced and continue to be displaced until now.

UN-Habitat, together with the government and development partners, is helping the Badjao community in post-Odette Surigao City to rebuild their homes and communities.

UN-Habitat invites other UN agencies, especially those working with IPs, to work jointly, using the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach to demonstrate a model IP community: resilient, safe, sustainable and inclusive.



United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Signe Poulsen
Senior Human Rights Adviser

The UN has recognized human rights are essential to achieving sustainable development that leaves no one behind and are central to all its three dimensions – **social, environmental, and economic**. Human Rights are

considered to be an accelerator of the Sustainable Development Goals. We need this, in a global context where we are lagging behind in progress towards achieving many of the goals.

In September 2023, the Government of the Philippines took an important step when it designated departmental focal points to engage in comprehensive and systematic monitoring of the Philippines' human rights obligations.

In an initiative led by the Presidential Human Rights Committee, these focal points will be in charge of **recording progress made to implement more than twelve hundred recommendations the Philippines** has received from treaty bodies and through the Universal Periodic Review.

The information will be compiled in a database. While this database is based on a global template developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), it is adapted to the local context, and information is owned by national stakeholders, who are also the only ones with access to the information. The information will then be used to draft the Philippines submissions to United Nations human rights mechanisms.

United Nations entities in the Philippines also have a role to play in engaging with these departmental focal point. Project design can incorporate promotion of, and reference to, specific human rights recommendations. Implementation should help the Philippines show progress made. And in turn, the departmental focal points can help advise United Nations partners on relevant recommendations in their area of work.

In the context of the new Country Framework (2024-2028), the designation of these departmental focal points is an innovative and forward looking initiative, which emphasizes national ownership, and which shows the need for a comprehensive approach including the full range of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

The Philippines is considered to be among the first countries that is effectively implementing this system, and it has already started sharing its approach to support implementation in other countries, and help the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner improve its tools in this area.



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)




Dr. Leila Joudane
UNFPA Country Representative

The shape of the population pyramid has changed in the last 30 years, from 1990 to 2020, and the change in the last decade was rapid in comparison with the demographic transition reached by the European countries in the last century.

This shift must be celebrated as the result of development:

- life expectancy increased,
- child mortality decreased,
- and fertility rate declined,



all of which transformed the structure of the population.

The window of opportunity for the Philippines to reap the Demographic Dividend is now open and will continue to be open even in the year 2030 – the deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The demographic dividend is possible when the proportion of working people in the total population is high. This indicates that more people have the potential to be productive and contribute to the growth of the economy.

Thus, we need to start right away to invest in people and in the right policies. Achieving the Demographic Dividend is not automatic; it will require investment throughout the life course:

especially on women, as they move from being a child towards adulthood. In order to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP), and Ambisyon 2040.

The Philippines is currently in the early transition period., The country therefore requires key investments to empower young people, girls, and women.

We need to give them access to secondary education, comprehensive sexuality education, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) . This investment will spur economic growth, resulting in poverty reduction and a higher Demographic Dividend.



United Nations Philippines

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