



UNITED NATIONS
PHILIPPINES



UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for COVID-19 Recovery in the Philippines 2020-2023





JOINT DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

The Government of the Philippines and the United Nations are long-standing friends and partners, collaborating towards the same goal: a prosperous Philippines built on sustainable development and inclusive growth and where no one is left behind.

COVID-19 compelled us all to assess and adjust our plans to not lose sight of this goal. While the Government of the Philippines updated its Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 in response to the emerging needs due to COVID-19, the UN Country Team revisited the Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2019-2023 and formulated this updated vision – the UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for COVID-19 Recovery in the Philippines 2020-2023.

This revised framework will guide our collaboration as we continue our focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and realizing the aspirations of AmBisyon Natin 2040. In a unified effort to get the Philippines back on track to regain lost ground towards inclusive growth and enduring resilience, the Government of the Philippines and the UN will work together, join our capacities and resources, and leverage shared opportunities and comparative advantages.

We remain committed to this joint journey in the service for the people of the Philippines.

Karl Kendrick T. Chua
Secretary of Socioeconomic Planning

Teodoro L. Locsin Jr.
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

Gustavo González
United Nations Resident and
Humanitarian Coordinator



Over 200 workers receive wages and social protection benefits as part of the Community Emergency Employment Programme (CEEP) of the ILO Japan Water and Sanitation Project. Providing decent work is highlighted in CEEP by recognizing the rights of workers, providing minimum wages, extending social protection, ensuring equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work. © ILO / F. Paslangan Cotabato City, Philippines



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Abbreviations

BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
BTA	Bangsamoro Transition Authority	SEPF	Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for COVID-19 Recovery
CCA	Common Country Assessment	SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation
COVID-19	coronavirus disease	TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	UN	United Nations
GBV	gender-based violence	UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
GDP	gross domestic product	UNCCG	UN Country Communications Group
JRGs	Joint National-UN Results Groups	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
JWP	Joint Work Plan	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
IDP	internally displaced person	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IP	Indigenous people	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
LGU	local government unit	UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration	UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
ITC	International Trade Centre	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
MAF	Management and Accountability Framework	UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
MEG	Monitoring and Evaluation Group	UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front	UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
MSMEs	micro-, small-, and medium-scale enterprises	WFP	World Food Programme
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority	WHO	World Health Organization
OFW	overseas Filipino worker		
PDP	Philippine Development Plan		
PPE	personal protective equipment		
PFSD	Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development		
RCO	Office of the Resident Coordinator		

Foreword

The United Nations (UN) is deeply committed to collaborating closely with the people of the Philippines in the country's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Philippines redefined its national priorities and responded to the pandemic's immediate impact, the UN shared the sense of urgency and rapidly adjusted to the country's changing realities.

The UN Country Team (UNCT) recognizes that COVID-19 is having unprecedented and long-term consequences on the development trajectory in the Philippines. For this reason, it has comprehensively reviewed the UN- Philippines Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (PFSD) 2019-2023 to ensure that UN's contributions are aligned to the government's current focus and plans. Building on a solid evidence-based Common Country Assessment (CCA) that provides updated data on key socio-economic parameters in the Philippines as impacted by COVID-19, a new roadmap for the UN has emerged to 'build forward better' while keeping the country within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) path.

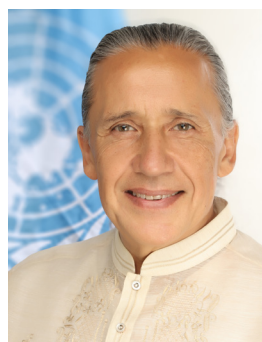
This process resulted in the ***UN Philippines Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework (SEPF) for COVID-19 Recovery in the Philippines 2020-2023***, which I am now privileged, as the Resident Coordinator of the UN in the Philippines, to present.

The SEPF forecasts the actions needed to support a robust post-pandemic recovery and to back the crucial peace process in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) through purposeful humanitarian-development-peace programming. To make this happen, the SEPF envisions building on expanded partnerships with a wide range of players from the private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, and international financial institutions (IFIs) as well as government. It also builds on the principles of the United Nations Development System's reform to

ensure an effective system-wide response to the exceptional crisis.

People are at the centre of the SEPF, particularly the ones most at risk for being left behind. The SEPF also furthers prosperity while preserving the planet and supports just and sustainable peace. In this way we remain committed to implementing the three mutually reinforcing pillars introduced in the PFSD – People; Prosperity and Planet; and Peace – through which we across the UN and with key government partners and other stakeholders collaborate to achieve agreed development objectives and accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in the Philippines.

The UN in the Philippines looks forward to engaging with government partners and other stakeholders to work together to meet the urgent demands of recovering from the pandemic, building forward better, and reaching people left behind even before COVID-19.



A stylized signature of Gustavo González in gold, consisting of the letters 'G', 'Z', and 'G' in a cursive, interconnected font.

Gustavo González

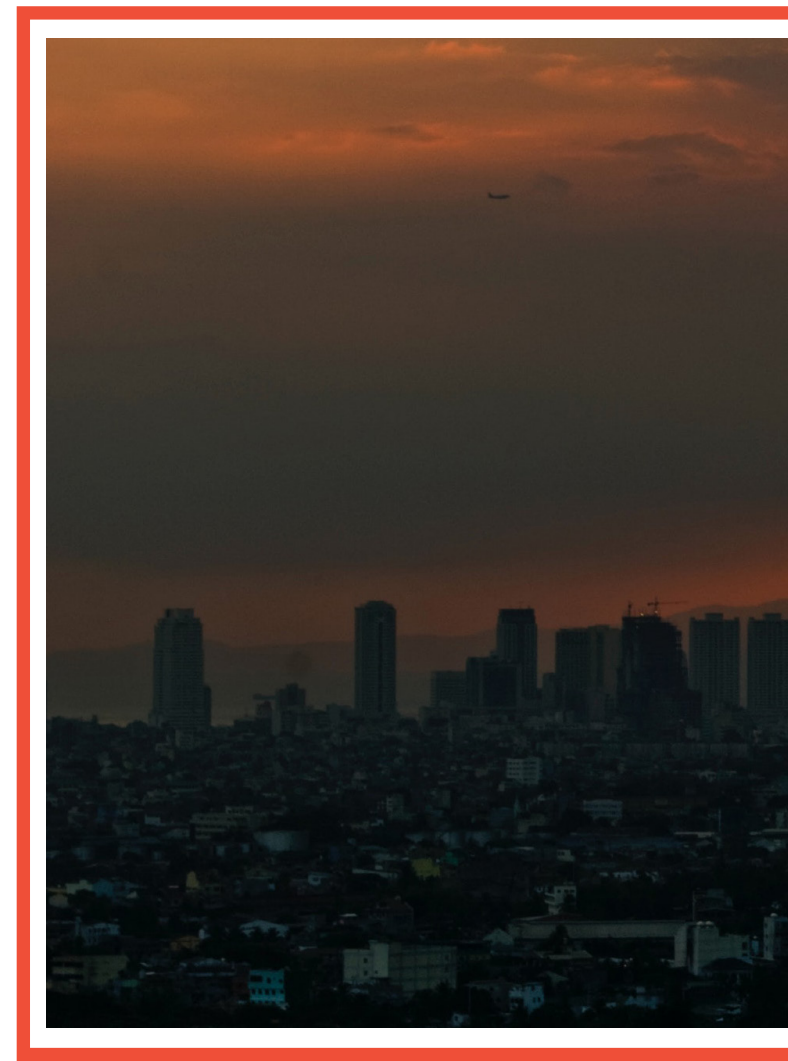
*United Nations Resident and
Humanitarian Coordinator*

1 Introduction

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis calls for global solidarity and cooperation with the Philippines to support its health system to prevent COVID-19 deaths and illness as well as its economy and society. How quickly the country can recover from the economic and social setbacks that have taken place during almost six months under lockdown will determine the extent to which it can fully live up to the aspirations of **Ambisyon Natin 2040** as well as the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022,¹ of bringing about inclusive development that leaves no one behind.

The Government has adopted the **We Recover as One** roadmap, with recommendations to rebuild national confidence and adjust to the “new normal” that will inevitably arise from COVID-19’s impact on the country.² The United Nations (UN) in the Philippines has quickly acted on its COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)³ and refocused the priorities laid out in the 2019-2023 UN-Philippines Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (PFSD)⁴ in order to target its support, including its resources, to where it is most needed to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.⁵ An update of the Common Country Assessment (CCA)⁶ has also been undertaken to provide an up-to-date analysis of the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on the Philippines’ development trajectory, to inform UN support to the government in its last-mile push to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The UN’s system wide commitment to enhance the way it works in accordance with changing realities and in line with the redefined national priorities is embodied in this UN Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework for COVID-19 Recovery (SEPF).⁷ The SEPF provides a roadmap for prioritizing, aligning, and positioning the UN in the Philippines. It incorporates follow-on actions from the HRP, updates the PFSD, and serves as our COVID-19 response and recovery



plan, addressing in an integrated manner the areas most in need of attention and support across the UN Philippines’ three mutually reinforcing pillars: People, Prosperity and Planet, and Peace.⁸

The SEPF takes a Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus approach to better address systemic causes of conflict and vulnerability and reduce the impact of cyclical stresses by making coordinated use of humanitarian, peacebuilding and development capacities and resources. As part of the UN reform, the SEPF adopts a ‘whole of society, whole of government’ approach in delivering as one by linking data/evidence to policy options, integrating financing models, blending partnerships, and exploring implementation solutions to achieve the country’s sustainable development targets. The SEPF will guide the implementation of the UN Secretary General’s Prevention Vision in the Philippines, particularly in the areas of reducing the impact of natural disasters and climate change, of



preventive and early action on violent conflict, and of advancing a preventive approach to human rights. The SEPF aims to ensure that people's needs are met, and their rights upheld, with a focus on those who are most vulnerable and at risk of being left behind. In doing so it prioritizes a transition to a healthier, resource-efficient green and circular economy, health and education systems that are fit for purpose and deliver services better to all, and sustainable social peace.

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in the Philippines consists of 11 resident funds, programmes and specialized agencies (FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, WFP, WHO), nine project offices/non-resident agencies (ITC⁹, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICRI, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Habitat, and UN Women) and two Secretariat Offices (UNDSS and UNOCHA). The SEPF does not represent or address all Philippine humanitarian and development challenges but defines the highest priorities to which the UN System

might add value and make a significant contribution during the next three years until the next cooperation framework.

These priorities align with the government's emerging priorities and recognize the UN System's strengths and added value as an organisation under reform with an enhanced UN Resident Coordinator System, a system-wide approach to partnerships and a new generation of country teams.¹⁰ They focus on selected high impact interventions where the Government is challenged to progress and where the UN system working together will catalyse sustainable change. The SEPF expresses the commitment of the UN in the Philippines to support the country's vision: "By 2040, the Philippines shall be a prosperous, predominantly middle class society where no one is poor; our people shall live long and healthy lives, be smart and innovative, and shall live in a high-trust society."¹¹

2

The people we must reach

This Framework puts people at the centre, aims to further prosperity while preserving the planet, and supports just and sustainable peace. Across these pillars, the SEPF expresses the UN's commitment to fulfil the 2030 Agenda's promise to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first. It incorporates the UN Secretary General's Call to Action, recognizing human rights as the ultimate tool to advance sustainable development, build a just and equitable world and prevent conflict. There is a need to address multidimensional causes of poverty and inequality to reduce the vulnerabilities of the most marginalized people. In doing so, the UN in the Philippines will uphold the rights of the people it serves and protects.¹²

Although the COVID-19 crisis has affected everyone, it has had disproportionate and adverse impacts on disadvantaged and at-risk groups, and many individuals are at the intersection of multiple groups. Furthermore, population sub-groups are affected differently. The availability of disaggregated data reflecting these groups and an understanding of the differentiated impact is crucial in implementing people-centred programmes and interventions. By using the UN's human rights-based approach and the Leave No One Behind guiding framework it is possible to identify those who experience overlapping and reinforcing vulnerabilities, deprivations and inequality and constructively engage with them in humanitarian-development-peace processes.¹³ Their participation and that of other demographic groups impacted differently by COVID-19 is essential in accelerating socioeconomic development and sustaining peace, while protecting fundamental rights.



A polio vaccination team crosses a bamboo bridge in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, Mindanao.
© WHO Philippines

The poorest segment of the population

People living in poverty have been most negatively affected by the pandemic, and many more vulnerable communities and families are at risk of falling into poverty. In 2018 the poverty rate was 16.7 per cent and 73.8 per cent in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).¹⁴ Poverty is primarily a rural phenomenon, with more than two thirds of the poor living in rural areas, where poverty incidence is almost three times higher than in urban areas. In Metro Manila and Metro Cebu, surveys show that 83 per cent of households with a monthly income of less than PhP 10,000 (about USD 200) have experienced a decrease in their income, while 40 per cent lost their whole income during the nationwide enhanced community quarantine between March and May 2020.¹⁵ According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 16.5 per cent in the second quarter of 2020. Additionally, the unemployment rate was estimated at 10 per cent by July 2020 compared to 5.4 per cent in July 2019.¹⁶ This could push 1.5 million more people into poverty.



It has been more than three years since Asnairah Guinato and her family left their home at the height of the Marawi conflict. They currently live in Sagonsongan Area 2, and are one of the families who received life-saving assistance from UNHCR and partners in 2020. © UNHCR/Jalanie Pangalian

Children

Child poverty in the Philippines or the proportion of children living in monetary poverty is high at 31.4 per cent, with some regions extremely high—for example BARMM with some 1.3 million children or over 68 per cent living in poverty.¹⁷ The impacts of poverty are more significant for children, and there is growing evidence that children experience poverty more acutely than adults. The negative impacts of poverty on their development can have profound and irreversible effects into adulthood. Although Philippines-specific estimates are not yet available, global projections suggest a 15 per cent increase in the number of children living in deprivation and in income poverty since the pandemic hit.¹⁸ Children from marginalized groups including street children, IPs, displaced children, working children, children with disabilities, and children in conflict with the law, appear more likely to be deprived of services (including access to school), to experience social

discrimination, to be trafficked or recruited into armed groups or used as child labour¹⁹ and to live in poverty.²⁰

Residents of vulnerable locations

The highest numbers of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines to date are in Metro Manila, which are the most urbanized areas in the country. Vulnerabilities are much higher in peri-urban and urban settlements, particularly in areas such as informal settlements, which house an estimated 1.4 million families nationwide of which almost 40 per cent live in the National Capital Region.²¹ Residents of these locations are already underserved when it comes to water, adequate housing, secure land tenure, information, and other resources and social services. This makes strategies such as testing, handwashing, self-isolation and quarantine particularly difficult to implement. Further, more than half of the population in conflict and natural disaster affected areas

is impoverished, compounding the risks these communities face. Among the 268,592 individuals displaced in Mindanao as of 30 November 2020, most were displaced due to previous conflict, crime, violence or disasters, but 3,540 were displaced during the pandemic.²² Internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in cramped camp and camp-like settings have limited access to basic services such as water, hygiene supplies and healthcare services, increasing their vulnerability to COVID-19. This also has an impact on host communities.

Indigenous peoples

The COVID-19 pandemic has left indigenous peoples (IPs) at a particular disadvantage, as compared to other sectors of the society.²³ This includes challenges stemming from limited access to relevant information and healthcare and discrimination in accessing health services. In some cases, IPs lack access to safe water, nutritious food, sanitation, and have limited agriculture, forestry and fishing-based livelihood options due to insufficient access to support facilities such as farm equipment and inputs, knowledge and information, skills training, and credit. As the communist insurgency is concentrated in remote areas where many IPs reside, they are caught in the crossfire and displaced. In addition, during quarantine, cases of land grabbing and displacement of IPs in the BARMM have escalated.²⁴

People whose jobs and livelihoods are disrupted

Migrant workers

The Philippines is a source country for migrant workers, including many healthcare professionals, domestic workers and tourism industry workers. The global impact of COVID-19 is having a devastating impact, with large scale job disruptions leading to the mass return of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).²⁵ As of the end of November 2020, more than 600,000 Filipino migrants have returned to the Philippines.²⁶ In addition, many OFWs remain stranded overseas with their savings exhausted causing remittances to contract for the first time in almost two decades.²⁷ The immediate prospects of local and overseas jobs for returning OFWs are extremely limited, outside



Rifao with 100 per cent indigenous peoples population now have access to clean and safe water built by the Teduray tribe under the ILO Japan Water and Sanitation Project. ©ILO/R. Pablo 22 June 2021

the health sector.²⁸ A deployment ban for Filipino healthcare workers, the majority of whom are women, was put in place in May and lifted in December, but with an annual deployment ceiling of 5,000 for new hire healthcare workers imposed from 2021 onwards.²⁹

Youth

The massive disruption to the economy and labour markets of COVID-19 has disproportionate impacts on the Filipino youth, mainly through job disruptions from reduced working hours and layoffs, disruptions in education and training as they try to complete studies, and difficulties transitioning from school to work and moving between jobs.³⁰ The estimated number of youth in the labour force fell from 7.7 million in April 2019 to 6.5 million in April 2020. Two million youth in the labour force were unemployed, 31.6 per cent of youth, compared to 12.9 per cent a year before. Meanwhile, the proportion of youth who are neither in employment, education or training with respect to the total youth population grew to 25.3 per cent from 18.7 per cent in 2019.³¹ Adding to this, disruptions of work-based learning have been significantly affected. Three quarters of both firm level apprenticeships and internships were completely interrupted because of the pandemic.³² In rural and urban areas, young 'agripreneurs' and agri-workers have also lost incomes, while some are losing jobs due to movement restrictions and business closures. In over 500 barangays surveyed across BARM, the lack of livelihood, particularly among youth, was found to be a main driver of instability.³³ The pandemic and its effects on poverty, unemployment and insecurity could make at-risk youth susceptible to violent extremism.

Small farmers, landless labourers and fisherfolk

While the agri-food system as a whole has continued to produce and deliver during the pandemic, small farmers, landless laborers and fisherfolk are vulnerable. During quarantine, agriculture, forestry, fishery production industries were exempted from certain restrictions to enable near-normal operations, while food manufacturing and processing plants were at half capacity. This ensured continuous food supply to both rural areas and urban centres, despite



Children miss school due to COVID-19 and move to online education and home-based learning, Muntinlupa City, Philippines ©ILO/Minette Rimando

logistical difficulties. Many farms were supported with inputs and fertilizers, credit and other financial assistance, to ensure cropping seasons would not be missed. At the same time, incomes of landless laborers were reduced and some small farmers and fisherfolk had difficulty securing agriculture and fisheries inputs due to the closure of agro-trading shops. Relatedly, the closure of banks and non-operation by financiers affected them, coinciding with the loss of livelihood and driving them deeper into debt. In Mindanao, the country's largest supplier of major crops for export, most farmers tend to one hectare or less, with a majority not owning the land they till.³⁴ They are vulnerable to brokerage, trafficking, illegal recruitment and human smuggling.

Informal workers and operators in the MSME sector

COVID-19 has had a negative impact on persons engaged in the informal economy, some involved in manufacturing and tourism. This impact is heightened for those supporting large families. Studies highlight that informal sector employees such as food vendors, and those employed in the service sector and transport and delivery of goods, who were already working in precarious conditions, will face a severe socioeconomic impact from the

crisis.³⁵ According to surveys, the majority of micro-, small-, and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) were operating at a decreased capacity (49 per cent) or were temporarily closed (38 per cent), suggesting that a significant share of them averaging 78 per cent lost income after the imposition of lockdown in many parts of the country following the pandemic outbreak.³⁶ For women micro-entrepreneurs, however, recovery is perceived to be easier due to the low capital needed to continue or resume operations.³⁷

Workers in sectors of high risk of job disruption

About 10.9 million workers (38 per cent of whom are women) are at risk of job disruption due to COVID-19.³⁸ This includes about 4.1 million women workers at risk of job disruption by COVID-19, particularly in sectors such as wholesale, retail and services,³⁹ potentially widening an already stark gender gap in labour force participation.⁴⁰

High-risk sectors are those that are least likely to remain operative with containment measures in place or are experiencing (or are likely to experience) sharp slumps in economic activity due to the pandemic. The sectors of high risk for COVID-19 induced job disruption include manufacturing, transportation and storage, accommodation and food service activities, and arts, entertainment and recreation. Overall, large numbers of workers at high risk of job disruption are in the wholesale and retail trade, transportation and storage, construction and accommodation and food services sectors.

Women and girls

Structural gender disparities, evidenced by the lack of economic opportunities and social benefits, unsafe and unfair labour practices, gender-based violence in private and public spaces and the threat of armed conflict have all been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic, placing women and girls in the Philippines at heightened vulnerability.⁴¹ Stringent mobility restrictions have reduced the ability of women and girls to seek assistance from law enforcement and women's organisations, or access alternative shelter. In addition, women are experiencing increased barriers in accessing health care. With lockdowns, school closures and disruption



Pathways into the world of work for large shares of youth in the Philippines are in sectors most disrupted by COVID-19, impacting their transition from school to work. Muntinlupa City, Philippines. © ILO/Minette Rimando.

in basic social services, women's share of unpaid household and care work, already disproportionately shouldered by them, has increased. These barriers are exacerbated by age, disability, and ethnicity, among others. Female locally stranded individuals (LSIs), migrant women workers, women in jails and detention, and others who may not have access to life-saving information and services, are at particular risk.

LGBTQI+ community

Thirty per cent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people in the Philippines reported being harassed, bullied or discriminated against by others while at work because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).⁴² Access to decent work is an essential part of LGBTQI+ people's lives, socioeconomic empowerment and ability to participate in the public sphere. Some 21 per cent of those surveyed in the Philippines believed that they were denied a job due to their SOGIESC and more than two-thirds had seen a job advertisement

that explicitly excludes their SOGIESC in the job requirement.⁴³ LGBTQI+ inclusion in the workplace enhances productivity which is all the more important in the context of COVID-19.

People living with HIV

Men who have sex with men are the most affected by HIV in the country. During the lockdown period, a UN rapid assessment found a third of people living with HIV to be unemployed and 10 per cent partially employed.⁴⁴ Access of people living with HIV to essential treatment services was affected by restricted movements and lack of public transportation, and repurposing of health facilities and health workers to the COVID-19 response.⁴⁵ The pervasive stigma and discrimination attached to HIV and associated risk behaviours has also compounded the challenge in accessing HIV services during the lockdown, such as reported disclosures of HIV status in checkpoints when crossing regional or provincial borders to go to treatment facilities. Fear of HIV and COVID-19 co-infection and lack of social protection and mental health services were also reported. In addition, the lockdown and border closures imposed to stop COVID-19 are impacting both the production of antiretroviral medicines and their distribution, potentially leading to increases in their cost and their global supply.⁴⁶

Persons living with disabilities

Persons living with disabilities face additional vulnerabilities and hardship due to COVID-19.⁴⁷ As the economy contracts, persons with disabilities—who represent 12 per cent of the population in the Philippines—are at risk of loss of employment and livelihoods.⁴⁸ Persons with certain types of disabilities are at higher risk of developing severe illness if contracted with COVID-19.⁴⁹

Asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons

The movement of over 1,000 asylum seekers and refugees⁵⁰ has been limited by quarantine measures. This hindered them from accessing basic services and government assistance. For some, this also resulted in the loss of livelihood and employment. For almost 130,000 persons at risk of statelessness⁵¹, the lack of identity documents limits their movement and makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In high density settlements, social distancing is difficult for households with multiple families, increasing their vulnerability. Certain communities in Mindanao are at risk of statelessness where birth registration rates are low.

People Deprived of Liberty

Persons deprived of their liberty (PDLs) face higher vulnerabilities as the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases can expand rapidly. This is due to the usually high concentration of persons in confined spaces and to the restricted access to hygiene and healthcare in some contexts. The Philippines has the highest jail occupancy rate in the world (464 per cent). This puts not just the PDLs at risk, but also the detention personnel and their families. The pandemic also exacerbated the inadequate drug treatment and care services in the detention facilities, and rehabilitation and recovery interventions have significantly dropped. Overcrowding prompted the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to release 21,858 jail inmates in an attempt to prevent further spread of COVID-19.

However, if not appropriately handled, releasing inmates may in fact spread the virus more.

3 Situation analysis



In the construction industry, monitoring proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is vital. Construction is one of the most dangerous sectors due to high rates of occupational injury and illness. ©ILO/M. Fossat

The Philippines is a middle income, medium Human Development Index (HDI) country that was geared towards becoming a high middle-income country by 2022, the end of the current Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022. The PDP aims to lead to “more inclusive growth, a high-trust and resilient society, and a globally competitive knowledge economy” by 2022 and more “strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure lives” by 2040 through implementation of its three pillars: (i) enhancing the social fabric (*malasakit*), which centres on improving the quality of governance and administration of justice; (ii) Reducing inequality (*pagbabago*), which focuses on expanding economic opportunities and increasing access to these; and (iii) increasing potential growth (*patuloy na pag-unlad*) through strategic policy, macroeconomic stability, and stimulation of technology adaption and innovation.⁵²

Up to 2020, the Philippines was one of the fastest growing economies in Asia, and many of the measurable targets were being achieved in the PDP, which integrates the sustainable development goals (SDGs). From being one of the three riskiest countries worldwide as a consequence of natural disasters, it ranked 9th in 2019, as a result of continued improvements in resilience building.⁵³ However, these gains are now at risk due to COVID-19. Moreover, inequality has been increasing and this trend is exacerbated by the pandemic. Informed by the updated Common Country Assessment (CCA)⁵⁴, the sections below examine macroeconomic conditions and policy response, as well as the COVID-19 situation as it relates to the UN’s three pillars of work in the Philippines: people, prosperity and planet, and peace.



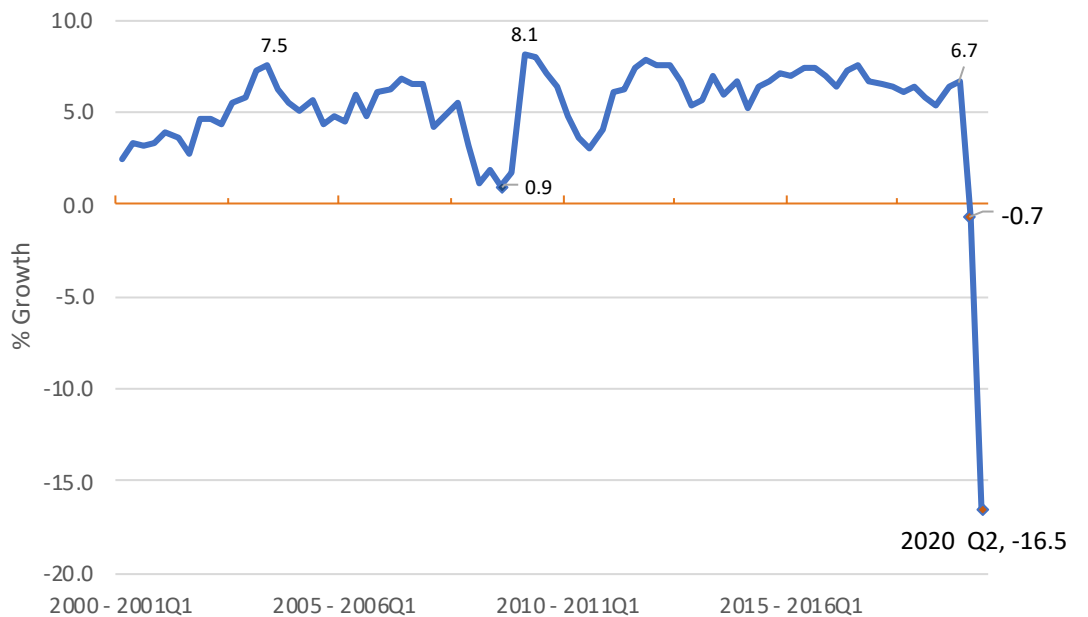
Decontamination of a power transformer at the Non Combustion Facility in Mariveles, Bataan. The plant was built to demonstrate the viability of available non-combustion technologies for the destruction of unintentionally released Persistent Organic Pollutants (uPOPs). © UNIDO/Edwin Punongbayan

Macroeconomic conditions and policy response

Although the Philippines has experienced rapid economic growth in the last decade, the underlying economic growth model pre-COVID-19 did not address regional growth disparities. Growth was highly concentrated in a limited number of regions and hubs. During the pandemic, lengthy quarantine measures stifled the movement of goods and services in the urban areas that contributed roughly 70 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP). The country officially entered a recession in the second quarter of 2020 with the GDP contracting by 16.5 per cent (see figure 1).

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Figure 1. Philippine GDP Growth Rate - Constant 2018 Prices, 2001 Q1 to 2020 Q2



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority



Loida Lagan, one of the women-beneficiaries of FAO's Post-Harvest Fisheries Training Program in Aklan Province, with her dried fish as a product of the training course. ©FAO Philippines

Although GDP recorded a better growth rate in the third quarter of 2020, growth by industry varied.

Overall, the growth rate was -11.5 per cent in the third quarter, compared to -16.9 per cent in the previous quarter. Services continued to have the highest share of GDP with 63.4 per cent in the third quarter of 2020. Services declined by 10.6 per cent in the third quarter, which was slower than the 17.0 per cent contraction in the second quarter.⁵⁵ The industries that contributed the least to the GDP in the third quarter were manufacturing (-9.7 per cent growth); real estate and ownership of dwellings (-22.5 per cent growth); and construction (-39.8 per cent growth). The top three industries that posted positive growth were financial and insurance activities (6.2 per cent); public administration and defense, compulsory social activities (4.5 per cent); and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (1.2 per cent).⁵⁶

The labour market began to recover in the latter half of 2020 but not by enough to restore pre-COVID-19 employment levels. Total employment contracted by 1.2 million in July 2020, with three per cent fewer jobs than a year before (July 2019) and 22 per cent fewer than the last quarter (April 2020).⁵⁷ As the economy has begun to open, the unemployment rate of 10 per cent in July 2020 eased slightly to 8.7 per cent in October 2020.⁵⁸ The service sector was

the most exposed to a loss of jobs with its share of employment declining from 58.2 per cent in July 2019 to 54.8 per cent in July 2020, while agriculture's share of employment increased from 22.9 per cent in July 2019 to 26.3 per cent in July 2020.⁵⁹

The immediate fiscal response was to repurpose the 2020 budget through the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (Republic Act No. 11469). This allowed the realignment and release of a total of Php360.46 billion for managing the health crisis.⁶⁰ The pooled allocations were released to implementing agencies for implementation of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), implementation of programmes to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on affected disadvantaged and displaced workers, a small business wage support program, Bayanihan Grants to cities, municipalities and provinces, procurement of test kits, agriculture projects, and an operational budget for temporary treatment and monitoring facilities.

The central bank contributed to the response through the advance payment of Php20 billion in dividends to the national government, and other liquidity measures such as a Php300-billion repurchase agreement with the national government and the opening of a window for purchases of

government securities in the secondary market. The monetary board eased its monetary policy through a 50-basis-point reduction on 25 June 2020, which brought the policy rate to 2.25 per cent. To reduce the financial burden on loans to MSMEs, the monetary board made it a policy that banks' loans to MSMEs and large enterprises that are not part of a conglomerate be counted as part of the banks' compliance with reserve requirements. According to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) data, around Php71.0 billion in MSME loans were used as compliance with the reserve requirements.

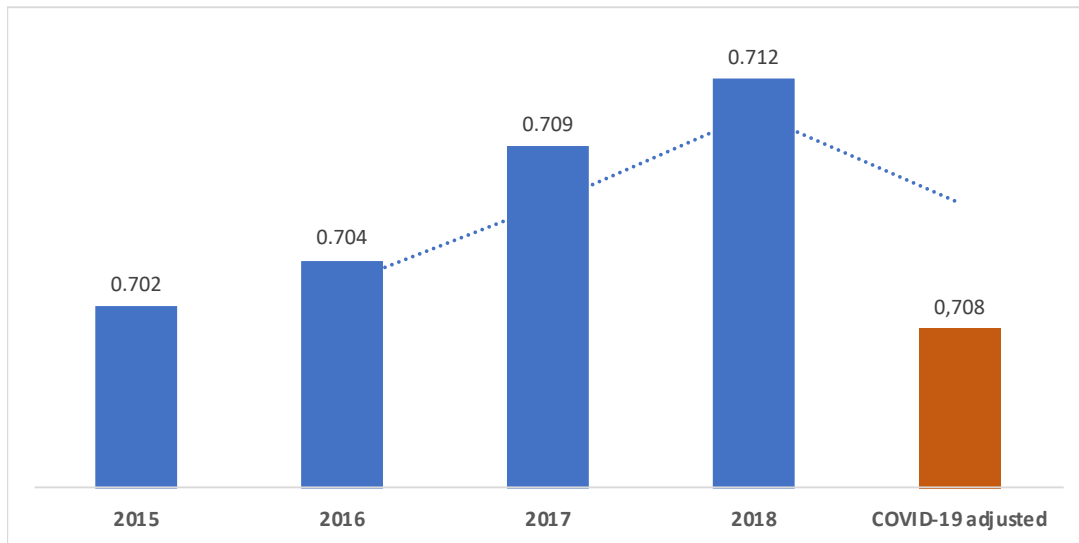
As part of the government response, the Bayanihan 2 programme provides an additional stimulus package worth PhP165 billion. A large part is set aside for soft loans to badly hit groups such as MSMEs, transport, tourism and agriculture sectors. It also funds health-related responses, subsidies and allowances for qualified students whose families were affected by work stoppage, and one-time cash aid for displaced teaching and non-teaching personnel who lost their jobs or who have not received their wages because of the crisis. Bayanihan 2 authorizes the reprogramming and realignment of funds by the national government and by local government units (LGUs).

Human development capabilities and opportunities for all

Although the human development trajectory was moving upwards before COVID-19, the pandemic is putting these gains at risk (see figure 2 on the next page). The Philippines' HDI value was 0.712 and it was ranked 106th out of 189 countries and territories in 2018, in the high human development category. However, 2020 has witnessed economic recession and decline of family incomes, including a significant drop in remittances from OFWs, with adverse implications on families' spending on health, food and education. The stakes are high: even a five per cent income contraction across all income groups is estimated to result in additional 2.6 million Filipino families becoming poor. Furthermore, human development progress is simulated to be set back about three years or could return to its pre-2017 level.⁶¹ Moreover, inequality was high before COVID-19 and is worsening due to the disproportionate impact of the pandemic in different population groups as mentioned above.



Figure 2. Human Development Index (HDI) 2015 – 2018 and COVID-19 adjusted for 2020



Source: Human Development Report – Philippines, 2019 and CCA Update 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely strained the capacity of national and local health systems,

which have shown weaknesses in isolating cases at symptom onset and contact tracing,⁶² as well as delays in scaling-up testing capacity and provision, and inadequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) which put healthcare workers at risk of infection. The Philippine Red Cross reported on 17 August 2020 the huge backlogs by the Department of Health (DOH) (more than 5,000 cases) in informing individuals about their positive COVID-19 results.⁶³ Moreover, the contact tracing ratio in Metro Manila barely improved from 1:4 to 1:5 after the re-imposition of the modified enhanced community quarantine on 4 to 18 August 2020. This means that for every COVID-19 case, the local government units (LGUs) of Metro Manila are able to track only five close contacts. There is also a significant backlog in the hiring of health workers and a lack of a rational utilization of healthcare facilities. Out of the 10,468 approved slots for emergency hiring of health workers, only 7,850 were hired as of 23 August 2020. This indicates that the Philippines has to strategically focus on contact tracing, early case isolation, and expanding the health sector workforce, as well as optimizing the utilization of facilities. Moreover, underlying health conditions, including those caused by pollution, have worsened health outcomes in COVID-19 patients, further straining the health system.

Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital received a fully equipped Emergency Maternity Tent Facility (EMTF) complemented with Reproductive Health Kits through the Multi-Year Prepositioning Project of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund in the Philippines, with the Government of Australia. The hospital will use the EMTF in assisting pregnant women under normal to complicated birth deliveries amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
©UNFPA Philippines



During the pandemic, most health staff and resources have been diverted to treat COVID-19 patients, leaving a greatly reduced capacity to address non-COVID-19 health service delivery for routine childhood care and acute illnesses, infectious and non-communicable diseases, and other vital health services. For example, it has diverted attention and resources for sexual and reproductive health services, and for response to gender-based violence (GBV). This, in turn, is expected to result in a rise in pregnancy complications, maternal mortality and morbidity, as well as an increase in unmet need for modern contraception, teenage pregnancies, and GBV. Furthermore, many routine immunization and nutrition programmes have been suspended, especially in areas with a high number of COVID-19 cases. At the same time, around 2.4 million children under five are susceptible to measles.⁶⁴ After 19 years of being polio-free, there was an outbreak of polio that started in September 2019 and is continuing.

In the delivery of health services, the pre-COVID-19 trend of increasing inequality between urban and rural populations and between dwellers in formal and informal settlements continues.⁶⁵ Many of the risks that define the living conditions of households in informal settlements exist outside the health sector, such as governance, physical environment, social and economic security.

COVID-19 has starkly demonstrated how differently women and men are affected and has contributed to worsening existing inequalities for women and girls. For example, community quarantines or lockdowns had the consequence of trapping women and children with abusive family members and perpetrators of sexual or GBV.⁶⁶ The pandemic has also forced women to work more and take on a greater burden than men in domestic care, as lockdowns forced schools, nurseries and support services to close and concentrated economic activities in homes. Over 50 per cent of urban poor and marginalized Filipino women reported increases in unpaid care work during the pandemic. Moreover, internally displaced persons (IDPs), single mothers, young mothers, those enrolled in the government social protection programme 4Ps, and older persons reported, on average, an increase of more than five hours in unpaid care and domestic work a day during the pandemic.⁶⁷



Workers wear personal protective equipment. © ILO/M. Fossat

Although the education trajectory suggests some improvements before the pandemic, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought extraordinary challenges for the right and access to education especially for children of disadvantaged families. More than 28 million children have been affected by the postponement of the start of the school year from June to October 2020, with only distance learning modalities. The change to blended education due to COVID-19 may further worsen access and inequality unless access to computers and smartphones as well as critical investments in quality education and ICT infrastructure are made.

Enrolment rates have dropped as schooling is switching to blended learning modes, which include a home-based approach, online distance learning, and TV- or radio-based instruction (see table 1). According to survey data, a significant number of the poorest households may not be able to access television-based instruction or online distance learning.⁶⁸ While the modular home-based approach is still the most inclusive delivery modality, it comes with greater risks and requires much time and effort, especially for remote areas.⁶⁹ In a September 2020 Senate hearing, an alarming decline (30 per cent compared to previous school year) in the number of students enrolled for the 2020-2021 school year in BARMM was highlighted.⁷⁰ This is the lowest current enrolment rate in the Philippines. Moreover, pre-pandemic, an estimated 20 per cent of youth aged 15-25 were not in education or employment⁷¹ and this is likely higher in the COVID-19 context.

Table 1. Basic Education Enrolment – Philippines

Regions	S.Y. 2019-2020	S.Y. 2020-2021	% Change
Region I	1,291,071	970,372	-24.8%
Region II	896,502	761,170	-15.1%
Region III	2,915,454	2,249,290	-22.8%
Region IV-A	3,833,280	2,926,456	-23.7%
Region IV-B	888,159	767,243	-13.6%
Region V	1,785,756	1,545,434	-13.5%
Region VI	2,046,081	1,631,964	-20.2%
Region VII	2,083,521	1,649,480	-20.8%
Region VIII	1,261,310	1,128,805	-10.5%
Region IX	1,039,924	853,488	-17.9%
Region X	1,311,257	1,027,742	-21.6%
Region XI	1,358,826	1,141,855	-16.0%
Region XII	1,273,434	1,091,831	-14.3%
CARAGA	776,855	645,151	-17.0%
BARMM	890,985	515,748	-42.1%
CAR	439,895	319,129	-27.5%
NCR	2,916,295	2,119,757	-27.3%
Grand Total	27,008,605	21,344,915	-21.0%

Source: Department of Education; Rappler. Note: Data as of 17 July 2020. Alternative Learning System (ALS) enrollees not included. ALS enrollees are at 739,872 in S.Y. 2019-2020. Data for S.Y. 2020-2021 is not yet available.

The future of education and training in the country remains riddled with uncertainty. Among the 1,565 private technical-vocational institutions in the Philippines surveyed by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)⁷², 99 per cent reported that they will close temporarily, while the remaining one per cent indicated that they will close permanently. Results also showed that 34 per cent of the survey respondents do not have the capacity to continue operations. In addition to the abovementioned, the extent of disruption in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the Philippines is documented by related surveys. For instance, about nine out of 10 respondents of the ILO-UNESCO-World Bank Survey on TVET and COVID-19⁷³ from the Philippines reported the cancellation or postponement of certifying exams and assessments for TVET trainees. Moreover, the delivery of work-based learning and apprenticeships has been affected by the closure of workplaces, with training provided

online in some instances. In one study, about seven in 10 respondents reported that COVID-19 has completely interrupted apprenticeship training and about half said that no adjustments in apprenticeship schedule were introduced despite the pandemic.⁷⁴

The economic, food and health systems disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic are expected to continue to exacerbate all forms of malnutrition.

Already 18.8 million Filipinos were severely food insecure from 2017 to 2019.⁷⁵ Due to loss of income, households' ability to purchase food has been reduced significantly in 2020. Roughly 11 per cent of households surveyed have poor and borderline food consumption and around 83 per cent of the households utilized negative coping strategies to adapt to the pandemic's effects.⁷⁶ The food security index varied greatly across regions, with Visayas and Mindanao showing the highest level of food insecurity. Hunger incidence has tripled from 8.8 per cent in December 2019 to 30.7 per cent in September 2020, the highest rate in the past 22 years.⁷⁷ The Philippines continues to be among 10 countries in the world where two-thirds of the world's stunted children reside. It is estimated that there could be a 14.3 per cent increase in the prevalence of moderate or severe wasting among children younger than five years due to COVID-19, resulting in an increase in child mortality. Around 6.7 million additional children are now estimated to have child wasting due to COVID-19 and its secondary impacts.

As the country enters economic recession, the disruptions of jobs and economic opportunities will further negatively impact marginalized, vulnerable, and at-risk populations as household incomes shrink and delivery of and access to socioeconomic services declines. Emergency financial subsidies including the government's SAP and the small business wage subsidy cushioned the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable sectors of society.⁷⁸ This helped to significantly reduce the number of Filipinos who were projected to fall into poverty. It is estimated that the SAP targeting up to 18 million beneficiaries kept almost three million Filipinos from falling into poverty (with a scenario of nine per cent contraction of the GDP persisting throughout 2020 as in the first six months).⁷⁹

In the context of COVID-19, pressure on civic space has had a negative impact on the fulfilment of fundamental freedoms.

Quarantine measures have restricted freedom of movement, freedom of expression and the right to peaceful association.⁸⁰ Similar restrictions have been applied for public safety reasons in multiple countries. However, the Philippines' more than 100,000 arrests between March and September 2020 for breaching quarantine indicate strict law enforcement by the authorities.⁸¹

Restrictions during COVID-19 are imposed within a general human rights situation which has in recent years been examined by the High Commissioner for Human Rights who has pointed out serious violations.⁸² A recent Human Rights Council resolution has created an opening for a new initiative for the UN in the Philippines to engage in technical cooperation to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights.⁸³

Productivity, prosperity, and sustainable development

The pandemic has brought about unprecedented negative impacts on the economy and labour market, sending ripple effects on employment, decreased fiscal space, pressures on local and urban governance, and disruptions in food value chain and distribution systems. It also magnified existing vulnerabilities and risks that the Philippines is already exposed to.

More importantly, the pandemic has underscored the importance of protecting nature, since the COVID-19 virus, like approximately 70 per cent of the pandemics that have emerged in the last few decades, has zoonotic origins, stemming from environmental degradation, declining extent and quality of biodiversity, and increasing human-wildlife interaction. This is mainly resulting from unsustainable economic activities and aggravated by climate change, which is also a major factor in disease emergence. High exposure to pollution, mainly coming from motor vehicles, factories and open burning, has increased people's vulnerability to the disease.

The effectiveness of response has been challenged by the need to balance protecting the health of the population and minimizing the economic impacts of quarantine measures. Combined, these have dampened the country's ability to achieve its goals to reduce income poverty, reduce inequalities, and attain upper middle-income status in the near term. Thus, the pandemic has put a spotlight on the need for development to be inclusive and sustainable.



The Philippine economy contracted by 16.5 per cent in the second quarter of 2020, following a first semester contraction of nine per cent.⁸⁴

Urban areas and cities in the Philippines are centres of economic growth, accounting for 75 to 80 per cent of the country's GDP since 2000.⁸⁵ However, with cities being epicentres of the pandemic, city economies have significantly contracted due to decreased local revenues and taxes, business closures, increased unemployment and general slowdown of economic activities.⁸⁶ Household consumption and private sector investment, which drove growth in the past, have significantly declined given the closure of businesses and the loss of income during the expanded community quarantine.

Micro, small and medium sized industries, considered the backbone of the country's economy, were hardest hit.⁸⁷

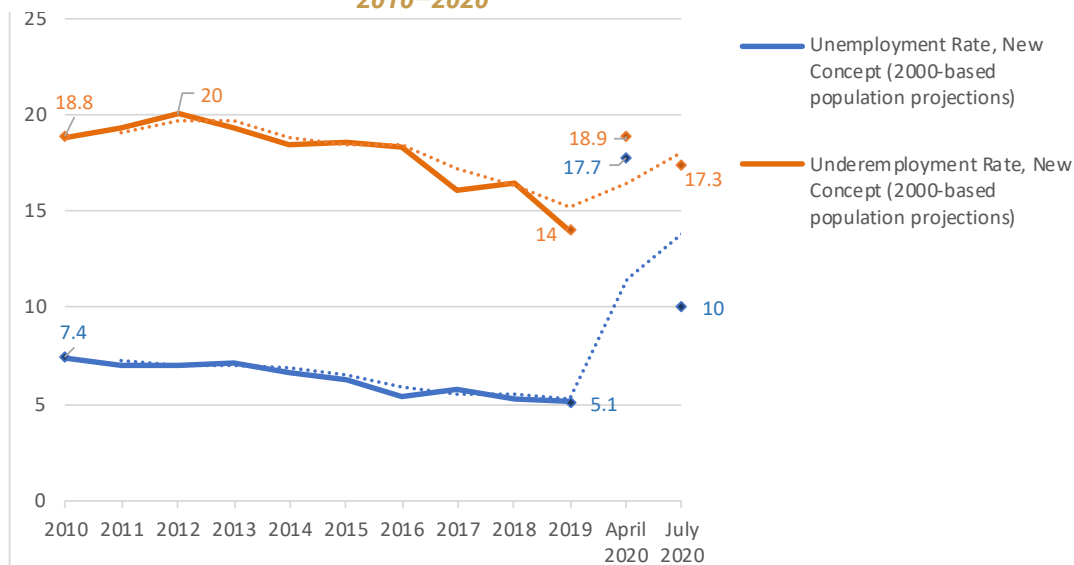
In early May 2020, only four out of 10 firms were in some level of operation, mostly micro enterprises and domestic oriented enterprises.⁸⁸ Of those not in operation, 50 per cent were not able to successfully continue during the enhanced community quarantine due to difficulties in managing supply chains and business operations, with around 50 per cent of those with Business Continuity Plans finding the plans inadequate in mitigating the effects of the pandemic. Of the firms that were able to operate, about 50 per cent experienced at least a 40 per cent reduction in operating hours, resulting in around at least 50 per cent loss of employment and 60 per cent reduction in both revenues and production volume.⁸⁹ In August 2020, data showed that MSMEs were navigating and adapting to some extent to the crisis, by transitioning to online operations.⁹⁰



TOP: UNIDO supports and implements projects that help reduce UPOPs emissions through resource efficient waste management systems by way of introducing Best Available Techniques (BATs) and Best Environmental Practices (BEPs) in open burning sources. ©UNIDO/Haidee Penero

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Figure 3. Unemployment and Underemployment Rates- Philippines, 2010–2020



Source: CCA (2020), 2010–2019 data; Philippine Statistics Authority, April and July 2020

Unemployment and underemployment increased greatly as a result of the pandemic (see figure 3).

Industries considered high-risk for COVID-19 induced job disruption are also at high risk of being displaced due to digitization and employ the greatest number of informal workers without access to social protection services. Youth face multiple labour market risks due to disruptions in education and training and job search constraints.⁹¹ More than 340,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have been displaced while more than 250,000 have been repatriated.⁹² An estimated 10.9 million workers, representing 25 per cent of total employment, are likely to be disrupted by the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and labour market, either through decreased earnings and working hours or complete job loss, and women workers account for 38 per cent of jobs at risk.⁹³

Transformations in the labour market are compounding the challenges caused by COVID-19 in the Philippines. Some sectors of medium- to high-risk of COVID-19 job disruption also have high shares of workers in occupations likely to be disrupted by digitalization such as in accommodation and food services. Likewise, sectors such as manufacturing, transportation and storage, facing higher risk for destructive digitalization but also with high potential for transformative digitalization, are highly susceptible to the job-disruptive impacts of COVID-19. More than 7.2 million workers in the Philippines are exposed to a double-tiered risk of job disruption.⁹⁴ Moreover, COVID-19 is likely to accelerate technological adoption in order to uphold health and safety measures while advancing economic activities. While digital technology adoption is considered to be below global average in the Philippines, there is a momentum among government and private sector for increased digital technology adoption as businesses adapt their business models in the COVID-19 recovery.⁹⁵

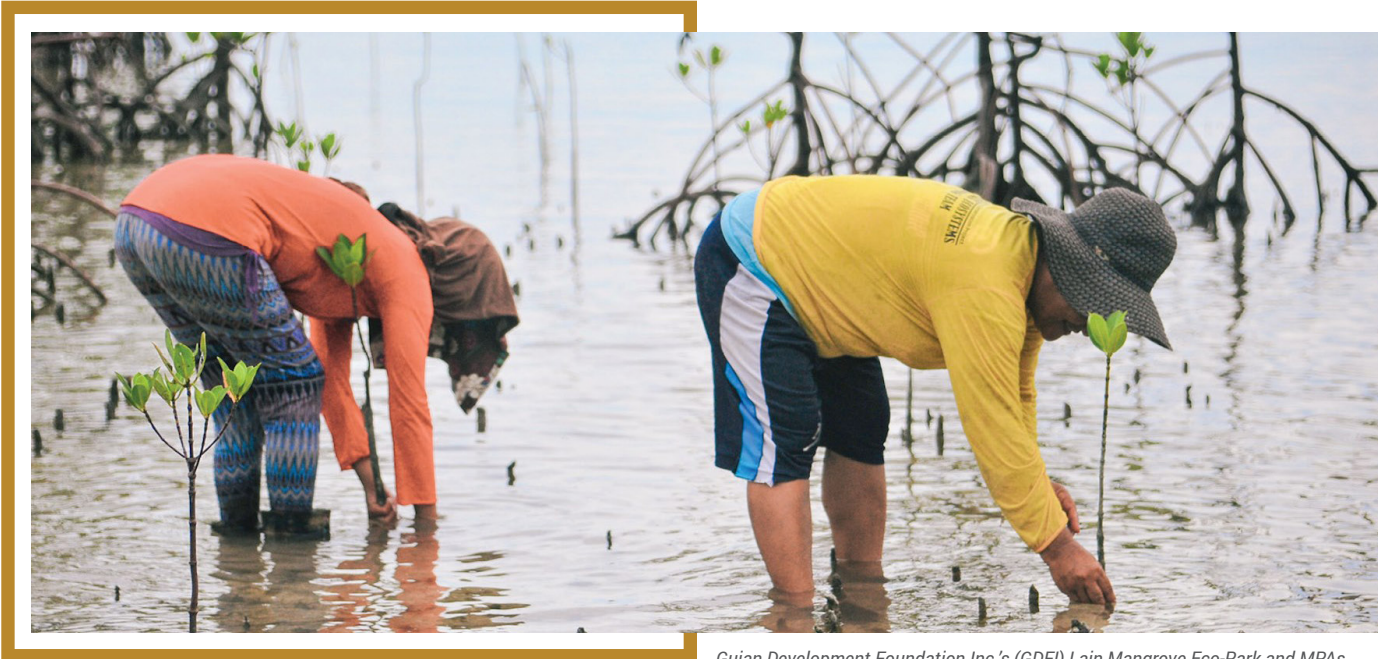
Migration is a reliant and critical economic and development driver for the Philippines. Cash remittances from overseas Filipinos (land-based and sea-based) amounted to USD 30.1 billion in 2019 representing 10 per cent of the Philippines GDP.⁹⁶ Remittances from internal migration also equalled that of international migration. In the first five months of 2020, overseas deployment for newly hired OFWs went down by 47 per cent. Deployment

of rehired OFWs also dropped by 50 per cent. The impact of “non-migration” on the Philippines economy cannot be underestimated.

Agriculture experienced positive growth during the pandemic and is expected to play a major role in the country’s economic recovery.⁹⁷ After some contraction at the start of the year, domestic output subsequently rebounded due to increases in crop and fisheries production.⁹⁸ The government response programmes helped farmers and fisherfolk cope with the disruptions that affected purchase of inputs and access to finance and credit as well as market and supply chains.

Production and demand for certain commodities will vary as the pandemic continues to affect certain food markets. For markets that are more interlinked, business will still suffer from restricted supply chains and tightening of credit. There will still be higher uncertainty in terms of consumer behaviour. Further, containment efforts and rising financial costs will dampen ability to invest or spend. Relatedly however, the rise in unemployment and significant reductions in incomes, along with the disruptions in food production and distribution systems, have threatened a section of the population, especially those living in urban centres, into short-term food insecurity and hunger.

The environmental impacts of the pandemic are both positive and negative. Mobility restrictions and reduced consumer demand have resulted in temporary reductions in carbon emissions and positive impacts on air quality in urban centres. This is also changing public behaviour towards more sustainable forms of transport that are safe with social distancing measures. However, there is the risk that communities in upland and coastal areas will resort to negative coping mechanisms from the economic shocks that could result in overharvesting of resources, increased unregulated conversion of forests into agriculture, and other unsustainable practices. Given the increased attention on hygiene and sanitation, water demand is likely to increase and exacerbate the competing uses among sectors. The 2021 funds for environment and natural resources as well as agriculture and agrarian reform are to be reduced, which could result in regression of gains made.



Guian Development Foundation Inc.'s (GDFI) Lain Mangrove Eco-Park and MPAs Monitoring Station, Brgy. Taguite, Lawaan, Eastern Samar. The initiative is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme in the Philippines. 2019. The GEF Small Grants Programme in the Philippines (SGP-5) is a program of the Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the Biodiversity Management Bureau of Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines. ©GEF SGP-5 – UNDP Philippines

The pandemic is imposing additional strain on the country's capacity to manage its wastes.

The amount of hazardous medical waste generation during the pandemic increased from an estimated 150 to 200 tons per day.⁹⁹ Massive use of plastics as PPEs and food packaging will add to the existing 2.7 million metric tons of plastic wastes generated per year, if no transformative measures are implemented.¹⁰⁰ Over 19,000 metric tons of infectious wastes, including PPEs, have been collected from April to July, at the height of the lockdown.¹⁰¹ The total combined disposal of the country's 32 registered treatment, storage and disposal facilities is only around 37,500 tons per year. Concerning are infectious household wastes such as masks, food waste and other contaminated materials. Their improper disposal and management have been contributing to marine litter.

The pandemic magnifies existing climate and disaster vulnerabilities of the Philippines.

Conducting safe and casualty-free evacuations during natural disasters in the time of a pandemic has added a layer of risk for local and national agencies in charge of disaster preparedness and planning. The overriding goal is to have zero casualties and zero transmission of the virus during emergency evacuations. With a forecast of 7-13 tropical cyclones from September

2020 to February 2021, and an emerging risk of La Niña, projections are for weather systems that will result in heavy rains, flooding and landslides likely to cause displacement.¹⁰² Based on past patterns, the displacement of people by natural events could either be short lived or protracted, depending on the scale, location and impact on properties and livelihoods.

Local recovery capacities are not well-prepared.

Many of the poorer LGUs, especially those in the central Visayas and Mindanao, are not well prepared or well equipped to address disaster recovery planning and public health emergencies, as evidenced by the absence of established contingency plans, strategies and mechanisms for the purpose. Returning OFWs, LSIs, IDPs and migrants face higher risk of transmission due to their higher exposure to transit areas and points of entry in the country. Urban and peri-urban areas have become epicentres of pandemic due to their dense population and high level of interconnectivity. Within cities, the most affected are barangays (villages) that have informal settlements.



The measures taken and the continuing need to contain the spread of the virus are forecasted to take a toll on local revenues of LGUs,

affecting basic service provision and investments for their constituencies and further undermine broader sustainable urban development efforts. This is all the more so, with cities contributing to more than 80 per cent of the economy, which has contracted, as discussed earlier. The pandemic impacts also highlighted development gaps and inequalities in the urban setting, particularly in informal settlement communities where access to water and health services, adequate housing, public space and food are severely constrained during crises. Overall, there is the risk that specific measures to kick start the economy and create as many jobs and livelihood capacities as soon as possible will derail the pre-pandemic plans towards a low carbon and green economy.

Peacebuilding

In the context of COVID-19, peace is fragile and increasing poverty, joblessness and inequalities have the potential to unravel peace and renew violence in some areas, particularly in Mindanao. The Philippines has suffered two major armed conflicts in recent years: one in Mindanao involving the Moro armed movement and a country-wide communist insurgency. Conflict stems from a combination of factors, including dispossession of land, chronic service deficiencies, deep-seated and widespread prejudice between diverse groups, power struggles between clans, and the recent rise of violent extremism—which is fuelled by societal exclusion and marginalization.

Although the government and active armed groups agreed to a ceasefire during the pandemic, the agreement soon broke down amidst mutual accusations of ceasefire violations and an escalation in hostilities. The national government proposed “localized peace engagements” coupled with an increased budget in 2021 for development projects in areas influenced by communist insurgency which have a higher incidence of poverty and are caught in the conflict trap.¹⁰³ To resolve this longstanding conflict, the localized peace engagements will need to address the root causes of the insurgency and demonstrate inclusive development.

The COVID-19 crisis comes at a critical juncture for the nascent BARMM, with ministries in the process of recruitment, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) yet to fully configure its administrative apparatus, and the region as a whole attempting

to navigate a delicate 'normalization' process. While the BARMM Government and other Mindanao regional administrations continue to manage the primary health effects of COVID-19, the secondary impacts resulting from travel restrictions and community quarantines are posing greater challenges to stability. These include lost and diminished livelihoods and incomes contributing to increased poverty and hampered access to formal and vocational education opportunities for children and youth. The gendered impact of COVID-19, including greater vulnerability to GBV, and loss of livelihoods and increased unpaid care burdens on women, reinforce gender norms that limit women's ability to exert influence and leadership in their family and community and mitigate conflict.

The COVID-19 situation has contributed to delays in key priorities of the Bangsamoro transition process:

normalization, decommissioning former rebel forces, and transitional justice and reconciliation. The Government's plan highlights extending services to underserved and unserved areas, particularly improvements in access to health, education and improved road connections. Although 12,145 Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) combatants have been decommissioned as of March 2020 and initial cash grants given, the ex-combatants have not received their full reintegration package and there are a number of remaining MILF forces in BARMM and non-BARMM areas waiting to be decommissioned. Moreover, the Joint Peace and Security Teams have not been mobilized, hindering the provision of community security. Further, plans for MILF camp transformations, critical for healing and social cohesion, have moved slowly. These delays in the transition process pose risks to achieving a peace dividend.

Expectations for the Bangsamoro peace process are high and if unfulfilled, could contribute to instability and rearmament.

The most critical evidence of looming conflict is the increase in the purchase of small arms and light weapons across the region—where firearms owned by combatants and private armed groups are already in circulation¹⁰⁴—due to insecurity over the loss of livelihoods and tensions over unresolved clan feuds that are intensifying during the pandemic.¹⁰⁵ In such an environment individual leaders and groups can take advantage

of increased local tension, fear and rumour to gain followers and further drive violent conflict. While not all these conflict dynamics would be addressed by the Bangsamoro peace process, delays in its implementation contribute to the uncertainty and tensions that stoke violence.

Despite the challenges that COVID-19 poses, the BTA has responded quickly, setting up a BARMM COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) composed of all ministers, offices and agencies of the BARMM, including LGUs. Immediately after the establishment of the IATF, the interim government distributed relief assistance to residents affected by community quarantine and allotted PhP 1.6 billion (USD 32.7 million) to fight the pandemic. Out of that, PhP 155 million went to LGUs as quick response funds, thus facilitating massive relief operations, such as providing medical supplies and PPE to the island provinces and equipping COVID-19 referral hospitals across the region.

In addition, BTA initiatives have strengthened the region's COVID-19 healthcare and pandemic containment systems, though the absence of an inter-government regional consultative mechanism remains an impediment to the coordination of response measures and movement of personnel and assistance. In May, the national Department of Health (DOH) issued a license to the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center to operate the first ever testing laboratory for COVID-19 in the region. Furthermore, isolation facilities have been constructed in the region under the Bangsamoro Ministry of Public Works to accommodate the increasing number of LSIs and returning OFWs. These efforts, notwithstanding the latest increases in COVID-19 cases, demonstrate the need for sustained efforts to better resource and strengthen the healthcare system.

Despite strict quarantine orders, there has been a rise in occurrences of localized violent incidents, most of which are rooted in conflict over land and have resulted in the loss of life and the displacement of thousands of families. Critical incidents include the expulsion of non-Moro indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands; inter-clan armed conflict; clashes between rebel groups and between factions of these rebel groups; continued attacks by Islamic State-

linked armed groups and an evolving geographic convergence between Islamic State-linked groups. These conflicts have forcibly displaced thousands of families, with 81,000 displaced in Mindanao between January and September 2020 due to conflict.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, mining and logging interests pose existential threats to IPs and their ancestral lands and the process of securing free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) has not been fully addressed. Despite the formation of the Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission, inclusive transitional justice and reconciliation is still lacking in a region inundated by turbulent political dynamics, strained public resources, intercommunal tensions and local conflict.

Climate change impact leads to increased displacement and violence in BARMM, especially in the Lake Lanao watershed. To address this, the Regional Peace and Order Council of BARMM has approved a draft framework for community resilience (CORE-BARMM) that will integrate the region's responses to pandemics, natural disasters and violent conflicts. The CORE framework will focus on prevention, preparation, response, recovery, adaptation and innovation as key capacities that will be developed at all levels of the BARMM government. The framework will be operationalized through Emergency Operations Centres that will serve both the NDRRMC and peace and order councils at regional, provincial, municipal and barangay (village) levels, ensuring integrated, conflict sensitive and gender-sensitive responses to disasters.

Conflicts in the Bangsamoro between different identity groups, disputes between clans and factions, contentious political contests in the run-up to the 2022 elections, and a prevalence of violent extremism have taken their toll on vulnerable groups. Given the significant increase in horizontal violence over the past six months, the possibilities are high for elections-related violence in advance of the 2022 national and local elections. Contestations for political power among the two revolutionary movements (MILF and MNLF), local political clans and strongmen with their private armies and criminal gangs; the formation of electoral alliances along regional and ethnic lines, rather than those of policies and programmes; and the lack of convergence across

different leaderships on a post-election vision for the Bangsamoro, all pose potential risks to peace.¹⁰⁷

Peace processes require long-term political and financial support which is challenging given the great demands on national resources posed by the pandemic. Insufficient financial support for the Bangsamoro peace process could affect the remaining two phases of decommissioning and cause disgruntled combatants to join other armed groups. This needs to be separate from the block grant and Special Development Fund allocations to the BARMM government so that it can continue both its COVID-19 contingency and development interventions. At the same time, the concerns of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) need to be recognized. With the focus on the normalization process with the MILF, many MNLF-dominated areas may be left behind. This could undermine the success of the peace process and erode support where the MNLF wields considerable influence, such as in the island of Sulu.



Mother and daughter, Calima and Mima, are volunteers in the Women-Friendly Spaces project in several temporary shelter sites in Marawi. The project is a partnership between UNFPA and the Australian Government. ©UNFPA Philippines

4

Theory of Change

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This section examines how system-wide joint programming involving UN agencies, the Government of the Philippines, development partners, civil society and the private sector will effect change in the context described above. **The overall theory of change is that if the UN system in the Philippines prioritises catalytic responses to the COVID-19 crisis, aligns with national recovery plans and repositions itself within the overall humanitarian, development and peacebuilding partnership landscape, then this will lead to strengthened results and impact in support of the SDGs.** Through a multisectoral partnership, a convergence of humanitarian-development-peace programming—focused on saving lives, promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, and improving social services, livelihoods and social cohesion—will enable all people in the Philippines to exercise their rights, meet their immediate needs, prepare for future shocks and achieve the 2030 Agenda. To this end, the SEPF envisions innovation-driven change across three interconnected pillars: People, Prosperity and Planet, and Peace. To elaborate on how this will happen, and serve as a basis for continuous joint reflection, the subsections below explain (1) the theory of change for each pillar; (2) the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach; and (3) the transparency and accountability lens that applies across the pillars.



Mother and child in Albay province ©OCHA Philippines/Martin San Diego

How change happens in the People, Prosperity and Planet, and Peace pillars

People

If health, education, social protection and food systems are strengthened and made more inclusive and resilient, then equity concerns are addressed, and individuals especially the most marginalized, vulnerable and at-risk groups will be able to lead productive and healthy lives.

Assumptions and risks

A key assumption is that in the context of constrained budget resources, innovative approaches that focus on developing human capabilities and enabling the exercise of human rights will deliver transformative results.

If these actions are not taken, there is a risk that due to the overwhelming impact of COVID-19 on the country's health and social protection systems, a large segment of the population could be left behind resulting in increased vulnerability. Another risk is that a prolonged COVID-19 pandemic will continue to disrupt the health system, limit availability and access to critical and essential health, food security and nutrition services for vulnerable populations most likely resulting in increased morbidity and mortality. Furthermore, the loss of livelihoods and slower than expected recovery will impact on vulnerable populations' ability to access nutritious and healthy diets, worsening the nutrition situation in some segments of the population. Fragmented LGU approaches to national policies pose risks to effective policy coordination and may delay the containment of the virus. Another risk is that if the cash transfers are not designed for different parts of the population and not sustained until full recovery is realized, and if budget allocations for basic service delivery are reduced, there will be a major regression in human development that could further widen inequality and could lead to increased illegal activity.



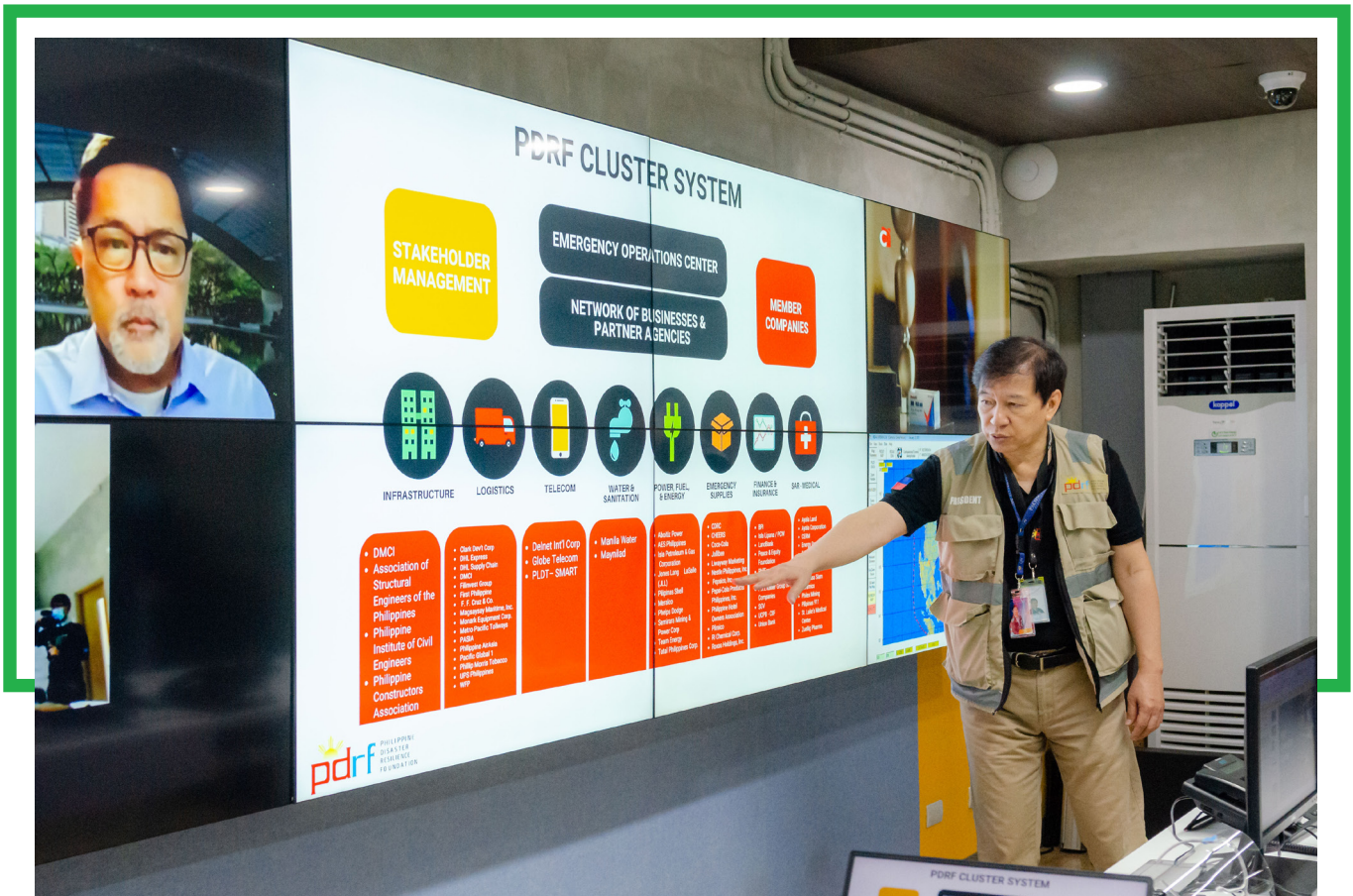
Prosperity and Planet

If development and urbanization processes are inclusive, risk-based and respect the limits of nature, environment and climate, then the Philippines will be in a better position to achieve its socioeconomic goals in a way that is sustainable, resilient to shocks, including pandemics, while reducing income poverty and inequalities.

Assumptions and risks

A key assumption is that green, climate transformative and resilient recovery will generate decent jobs, stimulate the economy, contribute to sustainable production and consumption and a more inclusive urbanization processes, promote health and well-being, and protect the most vulnerable, including those left behind.

What is at stake is that the process of economic recovery may further exacerbate existing inequalities within the society, unless a deliberate effort is made to ensure broad-based growth, by targeting sectors with high inclusive potential and ensuring economic opportunities for the most disadvantaged segments of the population. Another risk is that COVID-19 responses and recovery will be too focused on regaining economic losses, job creation and health protection without much regard to unsustainable production and consumption patterns and the existing vulnerability to disasters and systemic causes of pandemics. COVID-19 recovery or transitioning to a 'better normal' could result in scaling down rather than ramping up nature and climate responsive actions. Another risk is that without adequate consideration of risks, business, industry and the economy will repeatedly suffer immeasurable losses from disasters, including pandemics. Finally, there is the risk that urban development will lose its potential as an important driver of economic growth in the Philippines if it continues to significantly contribute to carbon emissions and not undertaken in an inclusive and resilient manner.



Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) President Butch Meily (standing) and Chief Resilience Officer Bill Luz (on-screen) presenting the PDRF Cluster System. ©PDRF

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If governance processes at all levels are inclusive, conflict-sensitive and responsive to the social and economic needs of marginalized, vulnerable and at risk groups, and communities engage meaningfully in inclusive socioeconomic development and reconciliation, then the most left behind will be more resilient and the Philippines will reap a peace dividend.

Assumptions and risks

A key assumption is that enhanced government capacity to continue implementing the agreed peace agenda, coupled with sustained economic investment to address the needs of those left behind, will strengthen community resilience and social peace.

Joint action is essential or progress towards peace in the Bangsamoro may stall. One risk is the high impact

of the country’s COVID-19 response and recovery on the national political agenda may lead to reduced commitment and ability to maintain momentum in the Bangsamoro Peace process. A second risk is that the agreed block-grant funding for BARMM may be scaled back in part due to reduced national revenues and in part due to the need to redirect funds for national COVID-19 programmes, hindering the Government’s ability to fully implement the Bangsamoro Development Plan and normalization. A third risk is that corruption may further hinder the Government’s ability to deliver on normalization. As a consequence, tensions and conflict may resurface, with civil unrest and wider discontent and increasing incidents of rido (clan feuding) in some areas.



A dealer delivers fruits and vegetables from farm to market to keep the food supply amid the COVID-19 lockdown, Muntinlupa City, Philippines. ©ILO/Minette Rimando

The humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach

On the path to recovery, there is an opportunity to address socioeconomic inequalities and vulnerabilities exacerbated by the pandemic, by strengthening the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus, for a more sustainable, resilient, rights-based, gender-equal and carbon-neutral future, instead of returning to systems and approaches that have proven unsustainable, unequitable and harmful.

The Humanitarian Country Team led by the UN Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator is implementing the COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which is part of the Global HRP. Providing a platform for early recovery is an integral part of the response strategy, with implementing partners expected to invest in strengthening community resilience and self-reliance, providing support that also builds long term technical capacity. Actions intended to address the continuing humanitarian impact of the pandemic are therefore also linked to the SEPF, which encompasses the UN system's capabilities across the broader humanitarian-development-peace nexus.



Monalyn Samillano, the mother of 4, said they received food relief of 5 kilos and a few canned food twice already since the community quarantine was implemented six weeks ago. As part of budgeting, the family had to resort to "dieting" or eating less than normal to extend the span of their limited budget from the relief. They had to rely on some vegetables from around the yard too. Her husband Arsenio lost his job as a construction worker since the quarantine started in Koronadal City in South Cotabato province South of the Philippines. ©UN Women/ Louie Pacardo

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This nexus approach is relevant not only in the COVID-19 response and recovery but also for other situations. The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world and is highly exposed to the impact of climate change. Resilience-building, climate change adaptation and other disaster risk reduction efforts in the context of highly vulnerable households, communities and systems in the Philippines and wider Asia-Pacific region requires stronger convergence between humanitarian and development actors. This is with our belief that resilience is a means to prevent, mitigate and prepare for risks in the long run, through access to information, enhanced capacities on appropriate risk reduction and transfer mechanisms, as well as adaptation practices and resources to reduce vulnerability.

The triple nexus approach is applicable across the SEPF's people, prosperity and planet and peace pillars. Operationalizing the nexus will imply integrating joint humanitarian, development and

peace analysis, assessment and programming with the objective of providing comprehensive multi-dimensional assistance through complementary and mutually reinforcing interventions, building on the comparative expertise and advantages of the UN system and its partners. This will also require an expanded partnership approach to be reflected in a new generation of coordination and consultative mechanisms, capable of overcoming traditional organizational, financing and programming silos.

A key element to the nexus approach is the empowerment of communities emerging from crisis situations through innovative initiatives promoting post-crisis productive rehabilitation, reconstruction and sustainable livelihoods. In a post coronavirus world, the MSMEs sector will likely again be an engine of growth in the Philippines, holding the key to socioeconomic recovery and future progress. Another possibility for exploring the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus specifically in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao could focus on

stabilization and conflict transformation areas of the BARMM where people are displaced, as well as on creating an enabling environment for peace in New People's Army-affected areas.

As part of the triple nexus approach, the UN in Philippines will set up an Area Coordination Office in Cotabato under the authority of the UN Resident Coordinator to facilitate coordination and convergence of programming in Mindanao. As part of this investment, a Common Operational Framework to enhance coordination among humanitarian and development partners in support of the Bangsamoro will be established.

Transparency and accountability

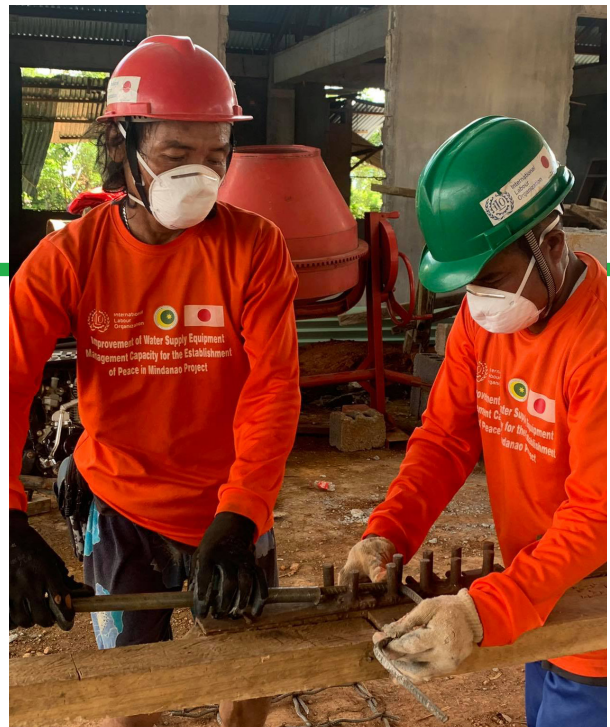
Governments around the world are now under increasing pressure to meet public demand for healthcare, education and economic recovery initiatives, including access to livelihoods and an adequate standard of living. The SEPF supports actions to ensure that the limited public and private resources available in the Philippines are effectively channelled to the intended individuals. Public access to a range of information makes transparency possible and is essential for accountability. In supporting transformation across the three pillars, the UN in the Philippines seeks to promote transparency and accountability through existing systems and channels such as information boards, websites and social media, existing complaints mechanisms, the legal system, and oversight bodies and mechanisms.

To the extent that health, education and other public service providers engage in two-way feedback with public service users and rights holders, for example, government is better able to allocate and monitor the use of public funds, and limited financial resources can better reach those in greatest need. Civil society actors, faith-based organizations and local leaders and officials who work directly with affected and marginalized populations may help reach remote areas with COVID-19 messages and other essential information as well as channel feedback to relevant public authorities. Not only may public resources be better allocated, to the extent that transparency and

accountability prevents corruption, this may also result in a net increase in public funds available.

More than ever, efficiency and effective use of public resources with transparency and accountability are key for success in the COVID-19 response, socioeconomic recovery and peacebuilding. In the health sector, for example, public institutions in some parts of the country may struggle with shortages of staff, beds or equipment, and healthcare professionals face difficult decisions relating to treatment and access to health care. In particular, the procurement of medical products including PPE is vulnerable to corruption. This risk is magnified as government dedicates significant funds to medical procurement. Similarly, social protection systems face corruption vulnerabilities.¹⁰⁸ In the Southern Philippines, as well, strengthening public sector integrity is a priority in order to promote peace and institution building especially in the BARMM government. In this context, the actions guided by this Framework in each strategic pillar aim to contribute to efficient and effective use of public resources, thereby adding value to the Philippine economy and people.

Households and schools benefit from a new water system built by indigenous peoples under ILO Water and Sanitation Project in Looy, South Upi, Maguindanao. ©ILO



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Our strategic pillars

The COVID-19 response, recovery and peacebuilding require not only retrofitting but taking new strategic actions to leverage the UN's joint capacities in partnership with the Government. This Framework aligns with the We Recover as One's priorities as well as the PDP, organizing its strategic contributions through a 2030 Agenda lens into three pillars: People, Prosperity and Planet, and Peace. Furthermore, our strategic pillars and, overall, the SEPF, encompass the strategic multi-sector approach under the UN framework, including five pillars, for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19 which is the UN's global strategy for a coordinated response to COVID-19.¹⁰⁹ The SEPF is aligned to this global Framework and thus serves as UN Philippines' Socioeconomic Response Plan, building on the interventions that UN Philippines has already introduced since the beginning of the pandemic (see more in Section 6) and leveraging the fact that the SEPF is responding to the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic but also looking beyond to strategically address the longer term recovery in the Philippines.



As shown in figure 4, the SEPF's pillars 1 (People) and 3 (Peace) include the United Nations Development System (UNDS) pillars 1, 2 and 5, and SEPF pillar 2 (Prosperity and Planet) includes UNDS pillar 3. No pillar is self-contained and each one ultimately contributes to attaining sustainable development goals and improves the lives of people. For instance, efforts under Pillar 2 (Prosperity and Planet), to improve the coherence of socioeconomic policies in support of shared property and sustainable consumption and production will also contribute to Pillar 1 (People) goals of better services, higher living standards, and better health for marginal households. Likewise, efforts under Pillar 1 unlock institutional bottlenecks and reduce institutional fragmentation by facilitating the delivery of social services. Programming priorities in all three pillars of the SEPF address issues of governance, and also link to the strategic pillars of the PDP (see figure 4). All three SEPF outcome statements should be read together.



A family in Tiwi, Albay Province, rebuilds their home following the impact of Typhoon Goni through shelter repair assistance provided through Central Emergency Response Fund projects implemented by the UN Philippines.
©OCHA/ Martin San Diego



People

The most marginalized, vulnerable and at-risk people and groups benefit from more inclusive and quality services and live in more supportive environments where their nutrition, food security, health and life-long learning are ensured and protected.

To support the Philippines to get back on track towards its trajectory of attaining a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living for all, the UN's actions under the People Pillar align with the PDP pillars that focus on enhancing

the social fabric (*malasakit*) and inequality reducing transformation (*pagbabago*). The UN will support the Philippine government in four focus areas that have been reprioritized in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as described below.

Holistically address the social determinants of people's health and strengthen health systems for enhanced health outcomes

The UN will support the strengthening of health systems, both restoring the provision of essential primary healthcare services and ensuring its continuation during outbreaks and disasters. Within the 2019 Universal Health Care framework, support for health systems will weave Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures, including the healthcare network as a key component of preventative healthcare services. Due to the pandemic, infection

prevention and control programmes are no longer the purview of health facilities but have reached out to homes and community spaces.

The UN will promote participatory and anticipatory health governance, to facilitate more inclusion in health decision-making and to build future thinking in governance and delivery of services in the health sector. This may include engaging local leaders and convening inter-generational dialogues that promote better understanding and creative cooperation to address harmful cultural and traditional norms and practices that perpetuate poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes of as well as discrimination and violence against women and girls; or using sustainable energy solutions for the continuous provision of essential health services. Support for anticipatory governance will analyse and reduce risks related to densely populated urban areas, overcrowded detention facilities, facilities for older persons, and camps and camp-like settings. Support for future-fit supply chain systems and management will utilize advanced technologies to improve service delivery for both COVID-19-related and non-COVID-19-related supplies. Furthermore, loss of income and reduction of opportunities for income can increase the risk of engaging in illegal activities, therefore, social safety nets and social protection designed especially for people who use drugs and people deprived of liberty who have different contexts, will be needed.

It is imperative for the UN to contribute to meeting the visible and hidden needs of women and adolescent girls during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the undisrupted provision of quality sexual and reproductive health services, including for maternal health and family planning, as well as child protection and GBV-related services, are central to maintaining the health, rights, and well-being of women and girls. To achieve this, the UN will support the development of information systems to identify, analyse and track their needs.

To achieve better service-seeking behaviour, **the UN will contribute to improving health literacy** (to impact on the demand side), recognizing that there are many reasons why people do not access services, including

fear of stigma, cost, inconvenience and, in the context of COVID-19, fear of becoming infected at a health facility. To this end, the UN will support a health communication strategy that incorporates health promotion and restores public confidence in vaccine programmes that encompass routine immunization, introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine, and targeted campaigns for outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. The strategic approach will ensure that health information is appropriate, accessible and adapted to the specific needs of vulnerable groups and will improve people's capacity to use it effectively. A robust health information system, innovation and a transparent prioritization process are needed for the achievement of Universal Health Care.

Enhance food and nutrition security

In view of the impact of COVID-19, **the UN will address food poverty and hunger from a food systems perspective**, ensuring that all dimensions including availability, accessibility, utilization stability and malnutrition are adequately addressed and supported. This will get the country back on track to end hunger and strengthen food security and prevent new zoonotic diseases. Specifically, the UN will support the Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger (IATF-ZH) to formulate and implement a National Food Policy. The UN will also support the monitoring and evaluation of the Philippine's progress in ending hunger, achieving food security, and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. Relevant reports and other technical knowledge materials will be prepared with the IATF-ZH's initiatives and recommendations. Recognizing the unique context of BARMM, the UN will support the priority actions in the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) roadmap, mirroring and extending the support being provided to the IATF-ZH.

The UN will prioritize support to prevent and treat wasting through the Global Action Plan on Child Wasting. The UN will support the Philippine government to prioritise and implement country specific actions, including food fortification and behavioural change communication. Priority actions will be integrated within the national efforts



Atcher Lipio, President of the Ban ao New Life Farmers Association runs an organic farm, using worms, which helped increase production and lower the cost for fertilizer, in an environmentally-friendly and climate resilient manner. ©ILO/Marcel Crozet

focusing on food systems, health systems, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Furthermore, the UN will support youth participation in agriculture and food systems and initiatives such as strengthening youth parliamentarians (e.g., Sangguniang Kabataan) participation in crafting or advocating for laws related to food security and nutrition.

The UN will also support the identification and roll-out of innovations to enhance the mobility, resilience and robustness of food supply chains.

This will help ensure that food logistics and accessibility concerns will be addressed, and that diversified and nutritious food will reach communities in good condition. Notable local government initiatives to shorten food supply chains, strengthen cold-chain systems, and reorganize the size and accessibility of food markets have emerged as good practices. In the context of COVID-19, digital solutions like online marketing and e-commerce have become prominent and are expected to remain vital in sustainable functioning of food distribution systems in the future.

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Strengthen the education and training system and bridge the educational divide

To sustain and provide quality education in the “new normal” context, **the UN will support the development and implementation of the national education sector plan.** This includes new educational norms such as enforcing early childhood learning, non-formal and vocational/technical education, promoting life skills training and social and emotional learning, and maximizing the use of digital or online platforms and other distance education modalities for learning delivery. However, online learning is predicated on the existence of fast, affordable, and widely accessible internet connection. Moreover, distance learners need smartphones or computers and basic digital literacy. To address this, the plan will develop a clear path to progressively include the most disadvantaged groups (out of school children, rural and indigenous students, children with disabilities, and low-income households without connectivity, among others) with significant increases in education budgets, capacity building at the national and local

level, and the adoption of participatory governance approaches and incentive structures to attend to the needs of the most vulnerable, including the provision of nutritious school meals.

To support the plan's implementation, **the UN will seek partnerships between the private sector, international donors and government agencies** to finance the required massive investments in technological infrastructure (connectivity, hardware and software), teacher training, and support to parents to better accompany their children's learning process from early childhood education to post-secondary education. Many children and families are at risk of being left behind with the distance learning modalities and it is urgent to form partnerships to reimagine an education system better technologically equipped and embracing the most innovative technologies that could improve learning outcomes in the Philippines.

The UN will support the Alternative Learning System and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), contributing to significant improvements to engage disadvantaged adolescents and youth as well as rural women, persons with disabilities and IPs. To better meet the differing needs and contexts of these groups, the UN will partner with training authorities to extend TVET's reach to less developed and more geographically isolated areas through more inclusive and participatory institutional mechanisms and processes. For women in particular, the UN will introduce new approaches to translate TVET participation into greater employability and more productive employment. The UN will also support alignment with emerging skills needs brought about by COVID-19.

Shore social protection systems

The UN will support strengthening the social protection system to minimize fragmentation, increase efficiency and improve its governance.

The current approach will benefit from strengthened coordination among agencies, and efficient targeting mechanisms to address the needs and specificities of rural populations, in particular vulnerable subgroups

such as women and girls, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants, forcibly displaced populations, and seasonal workers. Social protection operations need to be adapted to ensure that no disruptions occur in the delivery of benefits (e.g., removing conditionalities) and to be responsive to the needs of communities vulnerable to natural hazards and displacement, including emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be particularly challenging for the delivery of in-kind benefits or services, as well as cash. The UN will support strengthening of institutional capacities to apply a human rights-based approach, address human rights violations and abuses and promote civic space.

The UN supports achieving universal social protection in line with the PDP through progressive realization and mixing different contributory and non-contributory schemes and programmes. There is a need to look at how short-term social protection response measures to address COVID-19 can be transformed into longer-term comprehensive shock responsive social protection systems, including social protection floors, as this will ensure that recovery will be sustained and future crises prevented. This will also lead to greater investment in social protection policies and programmes and ensure benefits provided during crises are adequate and sufficient to meet basic needs and replace the income of households. Emphasis will also be placed on strengthening the linkages between social protection and protection, to more effectively address protection risks commonly associated with income poverty and material deprivation.

The UN will support social protection policy advocacy and financing strategy, particularly for the informal sector and workers with affected employment and livelihood. First, social protection operations need to be comprehensive and adapted to ensure that no disruptions occur in the delivery of benefits, with enough flexibility to immediately expand support when needed. This avoids the risk that rural populations and vulnerable groups may be left behind by social assistance or labour market measures, whether existing or to be put in place. Second, a reliable financing mechanism must be developed



Distribution of cash assistance to typhoon-affected communities in San Pablo, Catanduanes Province during the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) mission in February 2021. ©OCHA/Martin San Diego

using the Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF) that can allow financing the social protection systems as part of national strategy. This can also tap combined development and humanitarian financing targeting immediate response, as well as starting to build risk-informed mechanisms.

The UN will support the adoption of digital platforms to improve service delivery and coordination of social protection interventions.

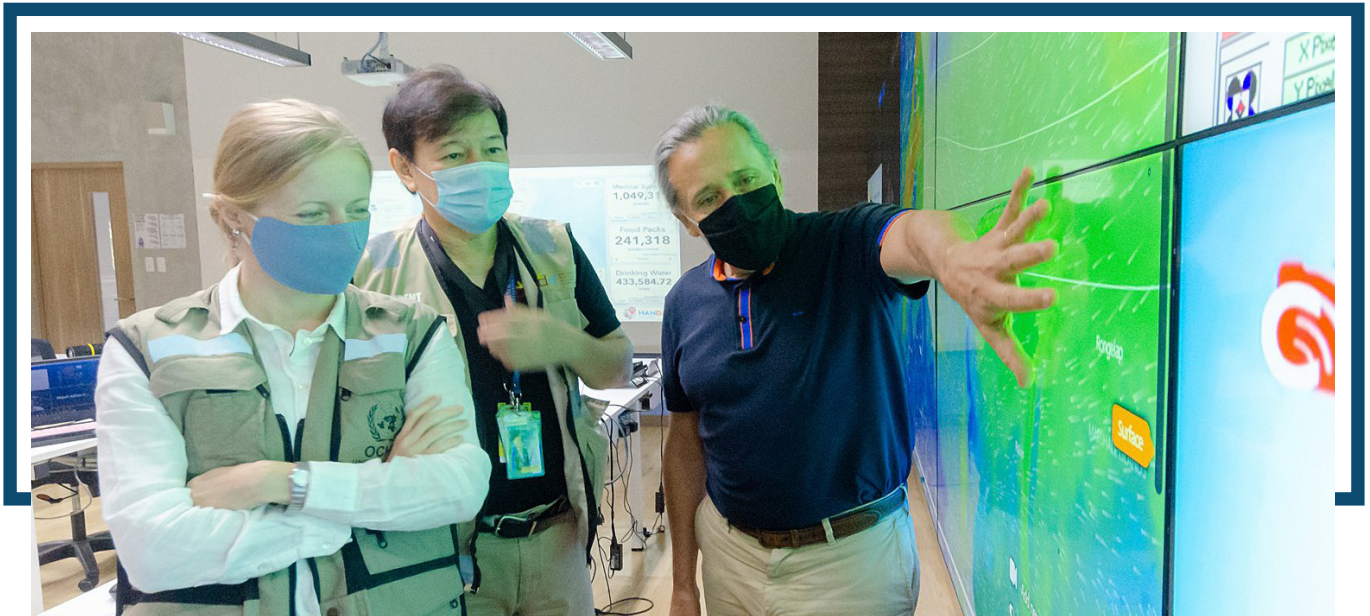
A fully digitalized registry and social safety net programme will enable faster payouts, expand the reach of social protection programmes and increase accountability. This would include four foundational elements: (1) government-issued digital IDs; (2) financial accounts for beneficiaries to receive money; (3) widespread use of mobile phones (not only smart phones) and mobile phone applications for easy and ready access to payments; and (4) transparency and accountability. Digitization will also facilitate coordination between different elements of the social protection system, including non-contributory and contributory schemes, to ensure the entire population is comprehensively and adequately covered.

Prosperity and planet

Urbanization, economic growth, and climate change actions are converging for a resilient, equitable, and sustainable development path for communities.

The **Prosperity and Planet Pillar** contributes primarily to the strengthening of foundations for sustainable development, and also aligns with PDP pillars on inequality-reducing transformation (*pagbabago*) and on increasing growth potential (*patuloy na pag-unlad*). Speeding up the reduction of income poverty in the medium term, at the same time putting the country on a path to shared and sustained prosperity for all in the longer term, will ultimately rest on how well the





L-R: Manja Vidic, Head of Office, UN OCHA Philippines; Butch Meily, Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) President; and Gustavo Gonzalez UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator. ©PDRF

Philippines can anticipate and leverage (in its own favour) the challenging convergence of climate change, natural hazards, economic growth and rapid urbanization and to what degree it has the necessary systems in place to recover from shocks. This calls for a recalibration of strategies to revert to the path towards reducing inequality and achieving economic growth that is sustainable. In support of this, there are several major opportunities for the UN to respond to the current crisis through joint programming.

Integrate green and climate lens in job-rich recovery efforts

The UN will support the integration of a green and climate lens in recovery efforts, including accelerating low carbon transformation by directing capital or stimulus packages towards emerging initiatives that will reduce emissions and wastes while creating jobs, rebooting the economy and improving human health. To this end, the UN will provide policy advice that provides evidence of green job creation potential, financial returns, and contribution to the SDGs shall be developed to support champions to advance this agenda.

A just transition towards an environmentally sustainable economy and society will be facilitated

through full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all. This includes supporting a job rich recovery, social dialogue, and continuity of businesses, with focus on MSMEs, that incorporates the sustainability and innovation lens. The UN will also support access to global-best technologies and approaches, the digitalization of work and other practices that result in resource efficiency and increased and cleaner production, reduced consumption of fossil fuels, with appropriate support to retooling and reskilling of the workforce that will be affected by the transition to greener jobs and livelihoods.

The UN will promote the greening of food production and distribution systems with increased attention to food safety and actions to address food loss and wastage, to help conserve land and water resources and to help mitigate potential health issues arising from agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.

Furthermore, the UN will support the integrated management of wastes, scaling up actions in support of national laws and international environmental commitments. This will be done through provision of additional facilities for treatment of medical wastes, strengthening capacities of healthcare waste workers in handling, storage and management of medical wastes, supporting hospitals and facilities in

complying with DOH guidelines on healthcare waste management, and establishment of digital waste registry. The UN will promote a better understanding of the risks of illegal imports of waste as well as the management of other wastes. The UN will also support the formulation and strengthening implementation of integrated waste management policies in hospitals and medical facilities, adoption of green procurement principles, and working with manufacturing, industry, and health sectors in the production and use of recyclable products and materials while combatting illegal flows of waste from abroad.

Strengthen resilience in all sectors and all levels of government

The UN will work with other actors to support local governments in formulating and implementing integrated response, recovery and resilience plans, including for COVID-19 recovery, disaster response during the pandemic, and long term resilience to climate hazards, pandemics, and other shocks. Disaster and climate risks will continue and are expected to worsen. The UN will support long term resilience that considers climate and disaster risks, with equal attention to economic, health, social, governance aspects to protect from future shocks. Policies and programmes that focus on the most vulnerable shall be given priority. The UN will support resilience building of rural communities, which play a crucial role in the stability of food systems as primary food producers. This will not only contribute to productivity but also to increase mitigation contribution and increase the adaptive capacities of rural people and their communities. In this light, the UN will support efforts to monitor special measures taken to protect and ensure resilience of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The UN will provide support across the value chain segment to further improve the resilience of MSMEs and the informal economy. The UN will help target the most needed financial support by working with government Departments on new and effective use of existing programmes, including

gender-responsive employment policies, as well as integrated strategies towards formalization, strengthened employment services and labour market programmes addressing transitions to decent work. The UN will promote digitalization and diversification and work with the Government to improve the operating environment including support to help MSMEs apply the health guidelines, benefit from tax holidays, access emerging markets, and transition to sustainable business practices. In doing so, the UN will promote environmentally-sound standards, tools, methodologies, and technology solutions for climate-change adaptation and mitigation, resource and energy efficiency, and occupational safety and health, and business resilience. This puts into focus the inter-relation between economic growth, job creation, and environmental protection, aspirations that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A whole of society approach that engages and strengthens capacities of different stakeholders shall be adopted.

The UN will facilitate coherent responses to address climate change, loss of biodiversity, balancing health priorities and pump priming the economy amid COVID-19 through consensus building, dialogue and social interventions such as the Just Transition framework. As a process, this involves multi-party assessments of policy options, plans, investments, response measures and scalable solutions that can bring an equitable, job-rich and green shift of economic sectors and systems. These dialogue-based mechanisms will provide opportunities for inclusive decision-making across policy development, planning and delivery of economic recovery programmes, employment outcomes and structural transition to sustainability.

Strengthen the capacity of cities to develop resilient and socially inclusive urbanized communities

The UN will work with city governments and other actors to design recovery measures and solutions to mitigate uneven impacts of quarantine measures on vulnerable groups through better use and management of data, use of innovations, and identification and adaptation of community best practices. Displaced populations are known to introduce innovative measures to help them adapt to their environment using only limited resources. The creation of socially inclusive communities within cities provides informal settlers, asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons equal opportunities to live in dignity and share in prosperity and also gives space for them to contribute to local economic growth. More broadly, the UN will support low carbon, sustainable, risk-based and inclusive development in major cities through greater engagement with stakeholders, co-design of apt solutions, and securing broad support.

Leverage untapped potential for agriculture-based inclusive growth and sustainable agri-food systems

The UN will support the Government in making agriculture an engine of growth and development in rural areas and a contributor to green and resilient urbanization in cities. To do this, the UN will work with the Government to identify and test appropriate policies and investments to boost productivity, enhance efficiency and increase value added. These efforts will aim to ensure agriculture transitions towards sustainable development outcomes – for food security and nutrition, inter-generational sustainability of natural resources and social equity.

The UN will support the Government to reinforce agri-food systems as a driver of broad-based and inclusive growth. The UN will work with Government to ensure that all the actors involved in the production, distribution and consumption of food, including disadvantaged groups in rural areas, will fully share

and contribute to this economic development process. To this end, access to resources like land; services like extension and finance; and markets will be strengthened.

Furthermore, the UN will promote environmentally sustainable and resilient agricultural development.

The UN will support the scale up of landscape approaches that integrate agriculture, fisheries, forest, land, water and other natural resources management for low emission and resilient production practices and value chains. The UN will contribute to innovative ICT solutions to increase farmers' access to climate and disaster risk information. This will boost adoption of risk-informed practices and enhance farmers' resilience to shocks.

Strengthen environmental protection and curb illegal wildlife trade

The UN will support the Government in addressing systemic barriers to ending deforestation and degradation of natural habitats including key biodiversity areas. This will help prevent the next pandemic.¹¹⁰ The deterioration of ecosystems, and the biodiversity within them – from habitat loss and modification, agricultural development, climate change, pollution, and overexploitation of species, including illegal wildlife trade – is increasing the risk of zoonotic disease pandemics. Programmes to promote integrated landscape approaches, livelihood support to communities, and strengthening capacities for local conservation efforts and protection of hotspots shall be strengthened. The UN will support in accelerating implementation of the Philippines Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and reducing the financing gap to achieve its objectives and targets.

The UN will support in scaling up implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This would include regulating food markets, wildlife facilities, making environmental crime a high-risk profit sector, strengthening biosafety standards and management of animal health and other factors relating to zoonotic

diseases from wild animals. The UN will work with other development partners, enforcement agencies and courts to address both the punitive and incentive aspects of illegal activities affecting the environment, including illegal wildlife trade, fishery crimes, illegal logging, and pollution. The UN will also support in developing multi country programmes to strengthen policies, sharing of intelligence and information, improving detection, identification of genetic sources, and improving citizen awareness and support.

Furthermore, to prevent future zoonotic outbreaks, the UN will support the Government to adopt a 'One Health' approach at all levels of decision-making by recognising the complex interconnections among the health of people, animals, plants and our shared environment, and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration. Adopting a 'One Health' approach will help the government identify and introduce policies and approaches that contribute towards achieving improved human health while maintaining biodiversity and ecosystems simultaneously. These policies will

Over 200 workers received wages and social protection benefits as part of the Community Emergency Employment Programme (CEEP) of the ILO Japan Water and Sanitation Project. Providing decent work is highlighted in CEEP by recognizing the rights of workers, providing minimum wages, extending social protection, ensuring equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work. Photo from ILO/F. Paslangan





Farmer benefiting from project 'Scaling up Risk Transfer Mechanisms for Climate Vulnerable Farming Communities in Southern Philippines', Mindanao, Philippines. ©UNDP/Ferdinand Edralin

39 also support the improved generation and use of linked environment and health data and decision-support tools, and the monitoring of both health and environmental outcomes.

Mobilize innovative finance for green, climate and disaster risk reduction and inclusive investments

The UN will work with stakeholders to mobilize public and private sustainable and green financing for SDGs through the development of an integrated national financing framework (INFF). It will collaborate with IFIs, the private sector, and others to design innovative finance and mobilize capital to deploy these in green, climate and SDG aligned

investments. These would include blended finance instruments with investments from the private sector, philanthropists, and other investors, green bonds and special bonds for local governments, conservation agreements, and other appropriate instruments. The UN will work with the Bankers Association of the Philippines, the business sector, the Central Bank, the Department of Finance (DOF), development financing institutions and other stakeholders. The UN will avail itself of international climate finance facilities for recovery interventions and stronger preparedness actions. In the context of the better normal, the UN will continue to promote and encourage financing of innovative and clean green investments and initiatives as a key driver for MSMEs on the quest for enterprise and societal growth.



Peace

Through inclusive and accountable governance, decent employment generation and essential services of health, education, security, justice, protection and recovery systems reach the most vulnerable in Mindanao, resulting in socially cohesive and resilient communities.

The **Peace Pillar** promotes peace by strengthening the foundations for inclusive and participatory development, income generation, and resilience in communities affected by violence in the Philippines. It aligns with PDP pillars on attaining just and lasting peace and enhancing the social fabric (*malasakit*) as well as inequality-reducing transformation (*pagbabago*). Prevention of conflict rests on inclusive and sustainable development anchored in the protection and promotion of human rights, gender equality, and leaving no one behind.

In the context of COVID-19, the UN is prepared to facilitate dialogue as well as community-government engagement to mitigate conflict risks and social tensions that could otherwise re-emerge. In Mindanao, the UN will support the COVID

response and recovery and the implementation of the Bangsamoro transition agenda, including employment generation, and building community resilience and peacebuilding capacities. The joint programming priorities for three focus areas are described, below.

Respond to COVID-19 and accelerate inclusive development for peace in Mindanao

The UN will provide institutional capacity development support for the implementation of BARMM's COVID-19 health response and recovery, including risk communications, and the continuity of other health services. To ensure that no one is left behind, the UN will support specific responses to prevent and limit psychosocial and mental health impacts of COVID-19, violence, and abuse of vulnerable persons. This will include addressing the greater protection needs of vulnerable sectors including IDPs, IPs, women and young people given the increase in gender-based violence, social tensions and conflict. Given the increased pregnancies during lockdown, and the need for identity documents to exercise rights, the UN will support the Civil Registration and Vital (CRVS) system in the BARMM to provide free mobile birth registration in displacement settings and geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities. The UN will also support the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) to demonstrate inclusiveness, transparency and accountability for resources spent on the pandemic response.

The UN will develop the capacities of the BTA and LGUs in reducing poverty and strengthening shock responsive social protection for the most vulnerable not covered by national safety nets. The UN, with its significant humanitarian-development-peacebuilding footprint in the Bangsamoro encompassing 14 UN entities, 96 programmes and projects and approximately 200 staff with experts seconded in nearly every ministry in BARMM, is well-positioned to support the BTA and provincial and local governments in addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all sectors, as well as development challenges

and priorities identified in the first Bangsamoro Development Plan. This will include supporting livelihoods, strengthening BARMM's capacity to receive returning migrant workers; getting children back to school; rehabilitating disengaged children and adolescents; improving food security and nutrition; extending essential services to areas unreached; and two-way communications for public information and feedback.

Moreover, the UN will support sustainable investments in communities to develop diversified and increased employment and income opportunities. The exclusion of community members from vocational training, income-generating and employment opportunities contribute to marginalization and conflict. The UN seeks to ensure that the gains of development ventures are enjoyed by all stakeholders and especially youth and women in the targeted communities.

Support normalization and political tracks of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro

The UN is ready to support normalisation, including transformation of camps and conflict- and disaster-affected communities via the nexus and community-driven development approaches. Establishing community platforms to develop and support social cooperatives and green enterprises based on viable value chains would generate incomes for former combatants and their families, and IDPs. Supporting inclusive camp transformation processes will empower non-Moro IPs and former women combatants to actively participate in decision-making and factor in their specific needs and the communities that they are representing, e.g., camps located in non-Moro IPs' ancestral domains. Promoting inclusive governance and empowering at-risk groups to be active socioeconomic and peacebuilding agents will counter systematic marginalization and prevent violent extremism. The UN will also support the transitional justice and reconciliation component of normalisation through policy advocacy and peace dialogue as well as



Chairwoman Norhaya Langco-Grande of Barangay Basak Malutlut in Marawi City organizes community orientations to facilitate community participation and inclusive decision-making with the support of IOM. ©IOM

capacity building of civil society organizations and BTA authorities.

The UN will support alliance building between the MILF-BTA leadership and other political actors. The BTA, of which the MILF constitutes the majority party, has been entrusted with creating a viable institutional framework before the 2022 parliamentary elections, which will mark the end of the peace process. This will need to accommodate the region's influential political clans/families, to ensure the Bangsamoro's social cohesion and prevent violence. The UN will support the engagement of these political actors on issues of common interest, such as addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and Marawi reconstruction. UN support will seek to harmonise various existing conflict resolution mechanisms and development programmes in areas of clan conflict. Supporting emerging political parties across the ethnic and ideological landscape in the

Bangsamoro with technical and operational knowledge would also promote broader democratisation in Muslim Mindanao.

The UN will support the prevention of electoral violence and a peaceful campaign, voting and transition in BARMM (regional elections will be conducted by the national electoral commission). The UN will support civic education; the development and enforcement of political codes of conduct; media monitoring; inter-party dialogue; activism by women's and youth groups against violence; electoral dispute resolution; early-warning-and-response; and active monitoring throughout the electoral period.

Reduce community-based conflicts, address community security and strengthen community economic empowerment

The UN will support conflict resolution around land in BARMM, as it is a key driver of conflict and displacement. The UN will advocate for national land, housing and property legislation to criminalise land grabbing and accommodate aspects of the customary systems that will make the formal system operational, including recognising the use of local mediation and dispute resolution institutions. In BARMM, the UN will contribute to the development of a framework for resource use management, agrarian reform, and recognition of Indigenous rights over land at the earliest possible time. The UN will also support the implementation of restitution and compensatory mechanisms to address the violations of victims' housing, land and property rights. This will enable camp transformation under normalization and the anticipated entry of investments (agribusiness and mining) as well as development inputs such as irrigation. For sustainability, the UN will facilitate inclusion of critical voices and perspectives of IP, IDPs, women and youth.

The UN will support land-related institutional strengthening and capacity building, including land, housing and property institutions as well as the newly created Monitoring/Oversight Committee on the Marawi Reconstruction which will influence the direction and pace of rehabilitation and rebuilding. The UN will also prioritize developing national statistical and information systems for sustainable data collection, reporting and analysis of land-related data.

The UN will strengthen community security responses such as community policing and early warning and response, along with civil-society-facilitated community dialogues, cessation of armed hostilities, and platforms to address and prevent crime and violence, and to facilitate recording of civilian casualties. The community-based dialogues would be aligned to the



Hopeful mother Jehan looks forward to a brighter future for her daughters and fellow women in Maguindanao. ©UNFPA Philippines/Jeff Maitem

transitional justice and reconciliation component of normalization. With the strong leadership and participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups, these actions will promote trust and productive engagement between communities and law enforcement entities. Multi-stakeholder platforms will be the basis to collectively reform and improve law enforcement approaches to crime, violent extremism, and terrorism. They will identify gaps in the conflict/crime prevention/security frameworks within formal and informal security mechanisms to improve conflict- and gender-sensitive approaches of security and law enforcement to prevent crime and violence in line with human rights, gender equality, and international standards. Also related to community security, the UN will support strengthening of national capacity for data collection on and monitoring of threats to civic space, as well as cases of attacks against health and humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities, or against others who make reports on or defend human rights.

no access constraints and international humanitarian law is observed including for the security of UN partners/staff. The UN will continue to work with its partners to monitor, prevent and respond to child rights violations as well as to implement the zero tolerance policy to sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, the UN will support multi-stakeholder groups to advocate for an extended ceasefire by both the national government and the communists with an indefinite time frame. The UN will explore opportunities with the national government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines to generate the needed trust and goodwill for coordinated bilateral ceasefires and to create conducive conditions for the start of back channel talks towards an interim peace agreement.

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The UN will also promote inclusive community-driven development in BARMM, for socioeconomic recovery and to strengthen social cohesion, especially in the context of COVID-19. The socioeconomic empowerment interventions will prioritize at-risk groups including women, youth, IP, IDPs, persons with disabilities and people deprived of liberty. Alongside livelihood support and skills development for communities in vulnerable situations, women will be tapped as community health ambassadors and advocates for greater social cohesion. The UN will also support capacity building for cooperatives and community-based organizations, and infrastructure priorities such as finding community renewable energy resources. Entrepreneurship and participation in value chains will be facilitated as well.

The UN will support protection coordination platforms that address the protection needs of IDPs in Mindanao, particularly IPs affected by armed conflict with the New People's Army in BARMM and non-BARMM areas. Building on the Protection Strategy for Mindanao,¹¹¹ the UN will identify entry points with civil society partners for the UN to support communities caught in the crossfire between the State and communist forces, provided that there are

6 Our COVID-19 response

The SEPF serves as the COVID-19 response and recovery plan for the UN Philippines. Following the UN Secretary General's call in April 2020 for all UNCTs to switch to emergency mode and adjust and expand resources towards meeting COVID-19 related needs, the UNCT Philippines mobilized rapidly and comprehensively to support its government counterparts in responding to the unprecedented crisis.¹¹²

The immediate UN response to COVID-19 in the Philippines spanned the country across the humanitarian-peacebuilding-development nexus.

A UN Philippines stocktake report shows that the first 149 response interventions by 20 UN entities provided technical support in 55 instances of capacity building, logistics, crisis management, healthcare waste management and communications support. The response also carried out 27 data management activities and diagnostic assessments of COVID-19's impact on health, social protection and economic development.¹¹³ In addition, the UN provided in-kind support such as COVID-19 testing and procurement of medical equipment, PPE and core relief items; supported 17 policy development initiatives related to COVID-19; and led 13 field operations in areas severely affected by displacement and poverty with many of these activities being implemented in a coordinated manner under the strategic priorities of the COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan.¹¹⁴

Taken together, the UN Philippines' interventions since March 2020 are delivering on the UN's global 5-pillar socioeconomic response to COVID-19 (see figure 5).¹¹⁵

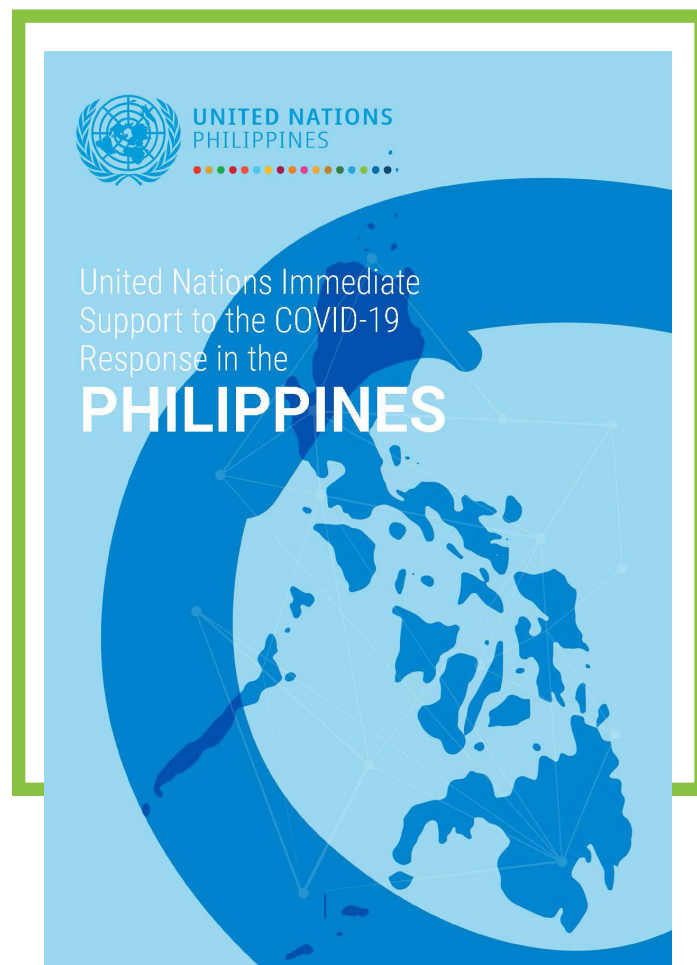


Figure 5. UN Socioeconomic Response Pillars

45 **Source:** UN Framework for the Immediate Socioeconomic Response to COVID-19 (2020)

With inputs from UN agencies, the Resident Coordinator Office is facilitating the reporting on the COVID-specific programmatic indicators to ensure that UN Philippines' interventions and progress are monitored and counted in the global reporting.¹¹⁶ As shown in Annex A, from the beginning of the pandemic to 30 October 2020, UN Philippines has contributed to the protection of the country's health infrastructure, enabled over 400,000 at risk individuals (women and children) to access essential health services during the pandemic, and reached over 100,000 with basic services and social protection assistance. UN Philippines is also working in the macro/economic response and recovery arena, with socioeconomic impact assessments informing government policy responses to the pandemic and direct support provided to vulnerable sectors and groups. Over 350 community-based organizations have also been capacitated to respond to and mitigate the pandemic, fight abuse and discrimination, and protect human rights.



Health workers receive the COVID-19 vaccine in San Juan City, Metro Manila. ©UNICEF Philippines

Moving from the immediate COVID-19 response to supporting recovery and resilience for the longer term

With the SEPF, the UN Philippines is moving beyond the immediate COVID-19 response and has updated its focus under the three Pillars in order to provide targeted and relevant support to the Government of the Philippines in the recovery phase. As UNw agencies have revisited the PFSD's outcome areas and identified where and how the UN can jointly make a difference in a changed context, a new roadmap has emerged. This roadmap builds on the UN's pre-pandemic PFSD and the re-programmed and new interventions that were implemented in the first 6 months of the pandemic.

Now the SEPF is building a bridge towards medium- and longer-term goals, supporting the Philippines' recovery and building forward in ways that will address inequalities and unsustainable development trajectories that were jeopardising the achievement of the SDGs even before the pandemic. With the SEPF, UN Philippines builds on the immediate response,

looks ahead and presents the next steps in the medium term and beyond. By merging the immediate response plan with an updated cooperation framework that will serve for another three years, the UN presents a roadmap for its offer in support of the socioeconomic recovery which extends over several years, beyond the elections scheduled for 2022 and beyond the end of the current PDP.

Table 2 on the next page shows examples of completed as well as ongoing immediate response interventions undertaken by UN Philippines under its three pillars.¹¹⁷

Table 2. UN Philippines' immediate and medium-term response interventions to impact of COVID-19

People	
Health and health systems	
<p>Immediate response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of PPE, WASH, disinfection kits to frontliners and target groups Procurement of laboratory equipment and supplies; ventilators Strengthened infectious wastes management COVID-19 prevention information dissemination Rapid assessments on COVID-19 impact on health services 	<p>Medium-term & recovery phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of health systems and preventive health care services Promotion of participatory and anticipatory health governance Ensure uninterrupted provision of quality sexual and reproductive health and GBV-related services Support for future-fit supply chain systems for medical supplies Support to improved health literacy/ communications
Food security	
<p>Immediate response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision and distribution of Family Food Packs to vulnerable families Transport support and equipment loan to ensure storage, move, and distribution of rice, frozen food, and other food Rapid assessment of COVID-19 impact on food supply chains 	<p>Medium-term & recovery phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate food poverty and hunger from food systems perspective Implement actions to stop wasting Support innovative strengthening of food supply chains
Education and training	
<p>Immediate response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support to enhance Government's Learning Continuity Plan New learning resources and psychosocial support to Alternative Learning System leaders Training on COVID-19 prevention to teachers and parents Survey of TVET providers on COVID-19 impact 	<p>Medium-term & recovery phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development and implementation of the national education sector plan Support technological infrastructure through partnerships between private sector, donors, and government agencies Support Alternative Learning System and TVET with special focus on disadvantaged adolescents, youth, rural women, people with disabilities and indigenous peoples.
Social protection	
<p>Immediate response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency cash transfer to poor households excluded from Government programs, and to refugees and asylum seekers Strengthened coverage of 4Ps programme for poor children Review of and support to meet needs of returning Overseas Filipino Workers Restructuring social protection floor in light of COVID-19 situation Digitalization of social protection payments 	<p>Medium-term & recovery phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support strengthening of social protection systems and governance Support GPH through advocacy and financing strategy to achieve universal social protection Strengthen digital platforms to improve social protection service delivery

Prosperity and Planet

Green, climate-responderent, job-rich recovery and resilience

Immediate response

- Assessment of COVID-19 effects on Philippine enterprises, MSMEs
- Support to Central Bank's Sustainable Finance Framework
- Consultations/ capacity building on gender-responsive recovery for businesses
- Renewable energy solutions for off-grid health facilities
- Support to start-ups to develop innovative approaches to COVID-19 recovery
- Strengthening of data management and use of AI to process and visualize data

Medium-term & recovery phase

- Support transition towards environmentally sustainable economy and society, including greening of production, distribution, waste management
- Support local governments in response, recovery and resilience plans to COVID-19, natural disasters, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and other shocks
- Support to value chain resilience to strengthen MSMEs and informal sector
- Support city governments to design recovery measures, including low-carbon, sustainable, risk-based and inclusive development, to mitigate uneven impacts of quarantine measures

Agriculture-based inclusive growth

Immediate response

- Rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on agricultural production to feed into resilience plan
- Provisions of seeds, fertilizers, poultry, livestock, animal feed to secure productivity during pandemic
- Financing support to small farmers, MSMEs and unemployed rural women

Medium-term & recovery phase

- Support GPH in developing policies to boost agricultural productivity and value increase
- Reinforce agri-food systems as drivers of broad-based and inclusive growth
- Support environmentally sustainable and resilient agricultural development

Environmental protection

Immediate response

- Study on COVID-19 impact on environmental rights

Medium-term & recovery phase

- Support GPH in addressing systemic barriers to environmental protection, including biodiversity, to help prevent the next pandemic.
- Support the prevention of future zoonotic outbreaks through the adoption of a 'One Health' approach to achieve improved human health while maintaining biodiversity and ecosystems

Innovative finance for green, climate and disaster risk reduction

Immediate response

- Funding review to support expansion of digital economy
- Support to Central Bank's Sustainable Finance Framework

Medium-term & recovery phase

- Work with stakeholders to mobilize public and private sustainable and green SDG-aligned financing, and in context of the new normal

Peace

COVID-19 response and accelerate inclusive development for peace in Mindanao

Immediate response

- Provision of core relief items
- Rapid impact assessments of socioeconomic impact of COVID in BARMM
- Procurement of ventilators for BARMM
- Provide support to Gov social protection
- Capacity building in crisis management response

Medium-term & recovery phase

- Support BARMM's COVID-19 health response and recovery through protection of vulnerable populations
- Develop BARMM's capacities to reduce poverty and strengthen shock-responsive social protection
- Support sustainable investments in communities to increase employment and income opportunities

Normalization process, Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro

Immediate response

- Assessment of COVID-19 impact on women, peace and security agenda
- Logistical support to returning decommissioned combatants
- Support to COVID response by law enforcement and criminal justice system

Medium-term & recovery phase

- Support to transformation of camps and conflict- and disaster affected communities through inclusive governance and protection of marginalized groups
- Support alliance-building between political actors
- Prevent electoral violence and support peaceful campaigning

Reduce community-based conflicts, strengthen community economic empowerment

Immediate response

- Protection service mapping in BARMM
- Strengthened information about GBV and SRH
- Capacity building of local government on protection mainstreaming
- Quick impact projects to promote community empowerment

Medium-term & recovery phase

- Support to conflict resolution and institutional strengthening around land
- Strengthen community security responses
- Support inclusive-community-driven development in the BARMM for socioeconomic recovery and social cohesions in the context of COVID-19

Source: UN Philippines.

These actions, among others, have served as first steps for addressing the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. The second column in table 2 above summarizes the focus areas that will form the basis for the upcoming process of formulating the UNCT's joint outputs, work plans and programming along the strategic lines presented in Section 5. Section 7 describes the operationalization of the SEPF in more detail.

UN investments in the COVID-19 response and recovery

At the end of August 2020, UN agencies reported a total of USD 29 million of secured funding for interventions that address the impact of COVID-19.

This rapid COVID-19 investment of new and reprogrammed funds, backing the 149 interventions described above, was supported by more than 30 resource partners including 16 UN-managed funds, multiple funds from eight Development Assistance Committee members and four private philanthropic



UN Philippines Resident Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez (third from right), with members of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority Parliament. ©UNIC/ Jeremy Arevalo

donors. Roughly 60 per cent of all interventions, many ongoing, are nationwide in scope, while 20 per cent focus on BARMM specifically, followed by the National Capital Region and other regions and localities. The stocktake report of the UN Philippines includes many but not all response interventions implemented by UN Philippines in recent months.

Entities have repurposed additional funding to meet emerging and rapidly changing needs brought on by the pandemic. This change in the financing landscape has been incorporated into the planning of the SEPF. Annex B provides the expected value contribution of the UN system for the 2020-2023 plan period, including repurposed and leveraged funds as part of UN response to COVID-19 which spans the entire country and the full humanitarian-peacebuilding-development nexus.

UN agencies have revisited their funding estimates for the PFSD (USD 506 million) and updated according to new projections, which has resulted in an increase in expected investments in the SEPF to almost double.

This is not due to expected increase in core and non-core contributions but because agencies are seeing emerging opportunities for leveraging new funding now that the three outcome areas of the cooperation framework have been revised and UN Philippines has a roadmap which addresses the current context changed by COVID-19 as well as political developments in the Bangsamoro.

The annual Funding Framework which will be developed for the SEPF (see Section 7), will contain a more accurate projection of annual financial resource requirements, funding availability and funding gaps by type of source, based on the most up-to-date financial information from UNCT members and resource mobilization of the UN system. It will be informed by the Joint Work Plans through which the UNCT will plan, cost, monitor and report its joint work in support of SEPF implementation.

7 Making it happen

The COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the imperative for innovative and expanded partnerships to respond to global development challenges. In the Philippines and globally, the search for effective responses to the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic has compelled governments and the international community to review existing cooperation instruments and frameworks and explore new partnership modalities. COVID-19 has brought a new impetus to the work of UN agencies, global foundations, development banks, bilateral development agencies and the private sector to join knowledge, capacities and resources in a more collective, coordinated and effective manner. The current crisis also underlines the need to strengthen investment in crisis prevention, risk reduction and resilience building. Postponing such investments increases the ultimate costs to society and prevention must permeate everything the UN does to avert the outbreak of crises. The UN Secretary General's Prevention Vision guides such preparedness to address natural disasters and climate change, conflict and violent extremism, human rights violations, and external economic and financial shocks, and the operationalization of this vision will be part of the implementation of the SEPF across the three pillars.

The financing landscape has changed dramatically since the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in 2015. Current funding patterns are characterized by a decline in core resources relative to overall



FAO staff launching a drone to survey damage wrought by Typhoon Goni (Rolly) in Albay Province, Camarines Sur. ©UNDP Philippines

funding, unpredictability and a rising share of tightly earmarked funds for specific activities. These patterns increase transaction costs, fragmentation, volatility and competition among entities. They also constitute lost opportunities, by hindering the system's ability to respond in integrated, flexible and dynamic ways to the Philippines and all UN Member States' demands and national priorities. Ultimately, they compromise the multilateral nature of United Nations support to the 2030 Agenda.

In line with the UN General Assembly Resolution on the repositioning of the UN development system,¹¹⁸ which calls for the enhanced authority of the Resident Coordinator to ensure alignment of UN resources with national development needs and priorities, and in consultation with the national Government, the SEPF embodies UN system-wide efforts to redefine national priorities in the face of COVID-19 and serve as the main partnership and joint resource mobilization tool.



Adnan Amerol and his family, home-partners at Marawi Resettlement Site Phase 1 in Hadiya Village, Brgy. Dulay West. ©UN-Habitat

Partnership

The UN will take a system-wide approach to partnership to implement the SEPF under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator to ensure alignment of UN resources with national development needs and priorities, and in consultation with the national Government. The SEPF builds on the principles of the UN reform to reposition the UN development system with a stronger, better-defined collective identity as a trusted, reliable, cohesive, accountable and effective partner to national counterparts. The Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) will develop a Partnerships Strategy with the UNCT to drive inclusion and impact and facilitate partnership platforms for dialogue to influence the public discourse on key strategic issues. The RCO will also identify opportunities for the UNCT to build on the linkages between the SEPF and the work of the Sub-committee on SDGs of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) to institutionalize learning mechanisms (e.g., the Voluntary National Review) within partnerships and national policy framework at large.

In terms of partnership, the following will be promoted:

- **South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) to diversify access to sustainable development solutions** that address common transnational development challenges (such as climate change, unsafe migration and pandemics). The RC with the UNCT will explore the establishment of an SSTC Facility in coordination with the Government of the Philippines to actively promote and support SSTC in the country.
- **Partnership with the private sector to create the conditions for inclusive and sustainable development and identifying shared values** to support the achievement of the SDGs. The SEPF provides the basis for system-wide joint programming to harness private sector contributions to the 2030 Agenda and develop a pipeline of bankable green, climate and SDG aligned investments.



Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) mission in Tiwi, Albay Province in February 2021. ©OCHA/Martin San Diego

- **Civil society to play a critical and diverse set of roles, all increasingly more relevant in the current context of inclusive, people-centered, value-based, resilient development.** The UN will identify entry points for civil society partners to operationalize the commitment of leaving no one behind into tangible action for people on the ground, especially those furthest behind, with greater attention to tackling intersecting discrimination and inequalities depending on gender, age, ethnicity, ability and more.
- **Regional platforms to provide the connective tissue between the global and national levels and offer regional perspectives on global issues,** as well as support the development of a wide range of regional norms, standards and conventions. Regional platforms and mechanisms (e.g., Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and thematic platforms and networks¹¹⁹) will be engaged to draw on regional policy capacities for knowledge sharing, good practices, data and integrated policy support to government and partners to address transboundary development issues identified in the SEPF such as countering terrorism and violent extremism, promoting and protecting human

rights, rule of law, and gender equality, combatting climate change, fostering economic, social and environmental development, and now responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financing

To finance the implementation of the SEPF, the UN will take actions to:

Fully implement the global Funding Compact, which emphasizes the importance of quality of resources (such as predictability, non-earmarking, and flexibility). The SEPF will contribute to the achievement of two Funding Compact key targets: increase the core share of voluntary funding for development-related activities and double the share of non-core contributions through inter-agency pooled funds and thematic funds. The SEPF Funding Framework will be designed as a financial planning, management and mobilization tool for use of the UNCT and other stakeholders, including the government, so as to align all sources of finance to implement national plans to achieve the SDGs.¹²⁰ See Annex B for an overview of estimated UN Agency fund contributions to the programming priorities of the SEPF as well as an overview of additional funds committed by the agencies as compared with the PFSD.

Apply the building blocks of the INFFs. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development call for the adoption of an INFF which provides a structure for governments to assess and reform their financing frameworks as a whole. UN support to the Philippines will include catalytic support: tools, technical assistance in strengthening government's national planning and budgeting mechanisms to ensure that resource allocation is more effectively targeted and in putting in place a more diversified financing framework that can together help to leverage additional resources for the implementation of COVID-19 recovery strategies, and ultimately, the achievement of the SDGs.

Set up country-based, issue-based pooled funding mechanisms to effectively address major development challenges in the Philippines by rallying UN expertise and capacities under cost-effective integrated interventions. The UN will establish suitable multi-partner mechanism to support the ongoing transition in Bangsamoro. Similar mechanisms will be explored with the Government and resource partners for catalytic SDG acceleration in the fields of health, education and employment generation.

Actively seize Joint SDG Funding and similar UN joint funding opportunities to scale up existing catalytic investments and better address the government's financial gaps in critical development areas. In line with the UN reform, emphasis will be on joint programming and joint programmes that can deliver innovative and context-relevant solutions at scale.

Improve competitiveness of UN joint initiatives to better access relevant global vertical funds markets. Research will identify the most appropriate funds in the context of COVID-19 and integrate analysis on financing as an integral part of the planning processes for any joint programmes or joint programming and development of joint work plans. The SEPF Funding Framework will provide an overall picture of the amount, type, source, duration, and sequence of financial resources, that are required, available or projected to be available, and will be mobilized by the UNCT to deliver on the outcomes

and outputs of the SEPF. In addition, the RCO will establish a market-intelligence capacity at the RCO to better identify emerging funding opportunities, including resource partners' calls for proposals in support of UN joint initiatives.

Actively engage with IFIs, including global and regional development banks. A number of MoUs and cooperation frameworks have been achieved with IFIs over the last decade. The ongoing global crisis offers the opportunity to make the most of existing tools and instruments and to cooperate to better support government's priorities including the achievement of the SDGs. The SEPF will leverage and enable further action by IFIs, notably in terms of policy advice and resource mobilization.

Strategically use domestic resources for SDG acceleration. As domestic resources dominate the Philippines' financing landscape, the SEPF will identify key strategic areas of investment to blend domestic resources with official development assistance contributions under cost-sharing agreements. The formula will leverage contributions in strategic initiatives contributing to reinforced partnership between government institutions and the international community.

Leverage private sector partnerships for innovation and policy transformation. Private sector partnerships can catalyze innovation and policy transformation. The UN will set up an Innovation and Policy Transformation Facility, supported by private sector contributions to fund the prototyping of innovative development solutions as well as key research for policy development.

Promote accountability in resource management through partnership recognition. Following the principles of the Funding Compact, the UN will take a partnership recognition approach to enhance accountability in resource management and ensure appropriate partnership visibility.

Implementation and Coordination

The SEPF represents the new generation of Cooperation Frameworks that has been introduced with the UN reform to ensure UN coherence, relevance, effectiveness and agility during implementation.¹²¹ As an update to the PFSD that also functions as UN Philippines' COVID-19 response and recovery plan, the implementation of the SEPF will build on lessons learned from the PFSD implementation as well as on more recently introduced guidelines.

Joint Work Plans (JWPs) will be developed to operationalize the SEPF and will be central to the implementation of the Framework. The JWPs will also identify opportunities for closer inter-agency collaboration (e.g., through joint programmes), collectively monitor and report on progress towards joint outputs, and provide periodic inputs to update the UN CCA.

The JWPs will reflect the SEPF outputs under the three Pillars; all related key UN development contributions delivered jointly or by individual entities, with a view to maximizing synergies of UN actions and avoiding duplication; and resources that are required and available as well as funding gaps.

The SEPF and its JWPs will serve as the basis for the approval of the UN programme, activities and projects to ensure continued agility of the UN system in responding to demands from national counterparts while further increasing the transparency of UN contribution to COVID-19 response, national priorities and the 2030 Agenda.

The UNCT will observe the provisions of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) of the UN Development System and Resident Coordinator System in keeping with the UN reform and to ensure accountability for the shared results and impact of the UN development system in the SEPF.



TOP: UN Philippines Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Gustavo Gonzalez on a mission in Tiwi Municipality, Albay Province, to assess the impact of Typhoon Goni. ©OCHA/Martin San Diego

BOTTOM: ©FAO Philippines/M. Nava

The UNCT is committed to work towards relevant, flexible and streamlined planning and management arrangements, including financial management, for SEPF supported projects and programmes. The UNCT will also continue to develop clear internal accountability structures, while striving to reduce the transaction costs of the government.

SEPF governance will be nationally owned with the Joint National-UN Steering Committee (JSC) as the central governing body. Under the leadership of the Government, and in close consultation with civil society and other development partners, the UNCT will take an inclusive and participatory approach to managing and monitoring the implementation of the SEPF. Co-chaired by the Socioeconomic Planning Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the UN Resident Coordinator, the JSC monitors progress, challenges and opportunities, and steers the direction of implementation; reviews the SEPF results; and supports resource mobilization as well as development financing opportunities.

The JSC will be comprised of the two co-chairs with the co-convenors of the Joint Results Groups at Secretary (Government) and Head of Agency (UN) levels and DILG (SDG localization). The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Department of Budget Management (DBM), the Office of the Cabinet Secretary, and the Department of Finance (DOF) will participate in the JSC as Advisors. Others may be called upon to provide technical advice and guidance on cross-cutting and thematic issues as the need arises.

Joint National-UN Results Groups (JRGs), one for each of the three Pillars, serve as the primary mechanism for facilitating the implementation of SEPF programming priorities and ensure a coherent UN system-wide approach. UN resident and non-resident Agencies and Government entities/partners engaged in joint programming priorities and contributing to SEPF outcomes will participate in the relevant pillars of the JRGs.

The JRGs will be co-convened by the Government (Secretary or its designated representative) and UN entity (Head of Agency) that are contributing to results in the SEPF pillar.

UN Coordination Structures

The UNRC within the terms of the MAF¹²² is the highest-ranking representative of the UN development system in the Philippines and is responsible for the coordination of operational activities for development of the UN in support of countries' efforts towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The RCO supports the UNCT in the development, implementation, monitoring and reporting of the SEPF and works with UNCT members to ensure alignment of both agency programmes and inter-agency pooled funding for development with national development needs and priorities.

The RC leads the UNCT in consultations with the host Government to define and agree on the UN's strategic response to the government's priorities. On the basis of these country-specific responses, the MAF also identifies the RC's role in facilitating a dialogue between UNCT members and government counterparts on country-level presence of the UN development system to ensure an effective, efficient and responsive field structure.

The UNCT is the main inter-agency coordination and joint decision-making body in the country, providing internal oversight of the implementation and monitoring of the SEPF. UNCT members must be nominated by their agency and empowered with sufficient decision-making authority over country-level programme activities and resources on behalf of that agency as they are accountable for achieving the SEPF outputs and results which they committed to contribute to.

UNCT members will actively support the RC within the context of the SEPF results framework (Annex C), including in policy and technical support, and normative standards and human rights (anchored on the UN's recommended indicators to measure COVID-19's impacts on human rights) and within available means to achieve agreed UNCT results under the JWP. UNCT members will also support the RC and collaborate in analysis, planning, tracking and reporting processes, information management, communication and advocacy in the context of SEPF implementation and in support of the 2030 Agenda.



A health worker at the frontline of service during COVID-19. Muntinlupa City, Philippines. ©ILO/Minette Rimando

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The RCO provides direct facilitative support to the UNRC and the UNCT and supports coordination of all inter-agency activities and the implementation of the SEPF, fulfilling five key functions of strategic planning; development economics; partnerships and development finance; data and results management and reporting; and communications and advocacy.

The UN Results Groups will improve internal coordination and drive the SEPF forward within the UNCT. They mirror the JRGs between the UN and national counterparts, make the UN development system a more effective partner and reduce transactions costs for stakeholders. Led by the respective UN co-convenor and alternate, it meets at least bimonthly or as the need arises. The Results Groups are comprised of experts from all UN entities represented in the UNCT and the RCO. The Results Groups aim to align with and feed into existing Government-led working structures, such as sector working groups, clusters, etc. This enables UN coherence in both representation and contributions to external mechanisms.

A Results Coordination Group, chaired by the RCO and with UN Results Group conveners and RCO team members as members, will support coordination, learning and synergies between the UN Results Groups and ensure mainstreaming of cross cutting themes across the UN Results Groups. The Results Coordination Group acts as a link between the UN Results Groups and the UNCT and will prepare the National Steering Committee Meetings.

The UN Country Communications Group (UNCCG), the Operations Management Team (OMT), and the Monitoring and Evaluation Group (MEG) are essential enablers for joined-up UN action, coherence and efficiency:

- The MEG ensures coordination, coherence and effectiveness in monitoring, evaluation and learning among UN entities implementing the SEPF. This includes ensuring that UN entity individual monitoring, evaluation and learning plans and activities are well coordinated with and support that of the SEPF.
- The UNCCG ensures effective, coordinated and coherent communication and visibility of SEPF process and results with key national stakeholders throughout the SEPF/ Cooperation Framework cycle.
- The OMT ensures efficient business operations, process simplification and harmonization agenda for new and improved levels of collaboration and more effective programmes.

The UNCT will establish and retain additional structures to enhance effective and coherent delivery of the SEPF such as a technical advisory group (to provide technical advice to the UN Results Groups) and thematic technical advisory groups (on Leave No One Behind/ human rights, gender equality and youth).

Accountability framework

Strategic approach for monitoring and reporting on the SEPF

A jointly agreed results framework (Annex C) and JWPs will drive programming and results reporting, including tracking progress against the normative agenda. The Framework's monitoring and reporting will align with existing, standard UN agency indicators and processes, to make data collection and reporting straightforward and efficient and to avoid additional burden and workload. UNCT scorecards mandated by the UN Sustainable Development Group (e.g., on gender equality, youth, and disability inclusion) provide indicators and targets relevant to the CCA and the CF, and also help ensure the integration of the UN's normative agenda in country team programming. Harnessing data to generate evidence to inform policy advice and programme management is also more critical now. There is a need to leverage data and analytics done across the UNCT, adopting a whole of UN approach, as much as possible.

Monitoring and evaluation is a shared responsibility across the UNCT. MEG¹²³, now expanded to include data focal points, supports results-based monitoring and evaluation of the PFSD and now in its updated version – the SEPF. MEG will also support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - in particular, government capacity building (monitoring and evaluation for the SDGs) through bilateral or joint programmes of UN agencies. MEG's work is in turn supported by the work of other coordination bodies such as the Results Groups and the thematic groups.

Core monitoring, planning and review activities for the SEPF

Monitoring of the SEPF, as an update to the PFSD, is an ongoing action-learning cycle that takes place throughout the implementation phase, ensuring that the UNCT is delivering its commitment to achieve results. It is important to ensure existing frameworks and plans are used to the extent possible to lower transaction costs for the UNCT and partners. Endorsed JWPs are the basis for the annual



TOP: ©IFAD

BOTTOM: Over 200 workers under the Community Emergency Employment Programme (CEEP) received their initial payment on 11 December 2020. Providing decent work is highlighted in CEEP by recognizing the rights of workers, providing minimum wages, extending social protection, ensuring equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work. ©ILO Cotabato City, Philippines

performance review, which feeds directly into the preparation of the annual country results report to the government. Monitoring of the SEPF, including its assumptions, takes place in close consultation with stakeholders.

An independent evaluation of the PFSD/ SEPF in the penultimate year is a mandatory system-wide country-level evaluation that is the main instrument to ensure the accountability of the development system for its collective contribution to a country's SDG achievement. It supports learning and informs decisions regarding the design of subsequent Cooperation Framework cycles.

M&E reporting structure aligns with all M&E activities

To communicate results, UN in the Philippines monitors the programmatic socioeconomic response to COVID-19 through a set of programmatic indicators that has been developed at the global level (see also Section 6).

This set of critical indicators have been translated into UN INFO as the primary monitoring and reporting tool of all UNCTs for this purpose, including the UNCT in the Philippines. UN INFO is part of the UN's efforts to improve coherence, transparency and accountability to better address the needs and priorities of Member States. UN in the Philippines uses this online planning, monitoring and reporting platform to improve and harmonize internal data collection mechanisms to produce comparable, system-wide data.

It aims to provide the UNCT with a clear picture of programmatic activities, partnerships, financial levels and results as articulated in the SEPF. One of UN INFO's core elements is tracking the UNCT's contributions to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs and fulfils the UN's promise to be a leader and partner of choice in the international development sphere. The data collected from the indicators will periodically show progress made on the roll out of the SEPF in the Philippines while also contributing to regional and global progress reporting.

Outreach, communications and advocacy

The UN working in lockstep with the Government until 2023 demands an outreach, communications, and advocacy strategy that is fit for purpose.

The UN is now increasingly moving towards communication that advocates for change, reaches out to stakeholders, and generates positive public support, engagement, and ownership of the direction charted by the Government towards building forward better, and which the UN fully supports. The outreach, communications and advocacy objective is to mobilize all stakeholder groups, including communities, through the convening power of the UN and the strategic deployment of all its resources, to support the Philippines' national plans and strategies as they pertain to development and peace-building.

The UNCCG will lead the UN Philippines in this mission. The UNCCG is an interagency body comprising agency communication and advocacy focal points. The UNCCG is responsible for development of a UN Outreach, Communications and Advocacy Strategy, and its implementation through the priorities identified in annual work plans. The UNCCG is convened by a communications specialist in the RCO. The UNCCG will work closely with the MEG and other coordinating groups to ensure that the outreach, communications and advocacy strategy is evidence-based and demand-driven throughout its implementation. The UNCCG will develop an annual workplan to ensure that the strategy is fully implemented and in a timely manner. A formal/regular UNCCG representative is proposed to be designated as part of the Management Structure of the Framework. The UNCCG will monitor for results and report on a regular basis to the RC and the UNCT on progress of implementation of the Communication Strategy and work plan.

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Annex A.

Reporting by UN Philippines on the socioeconomic response to COVID-19

The table below shows in more detail how the UNCT's interventions to address the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 has reached millions of people in the Philippines.

SERP Pillar	Total Q3 +Q4 2020	Contributing agencies
Pillar 1 HEALTH FIRST: Protecting health services and systems during the crisis		
Indicator 1.1 Number of people accessing essential (non COVID 19 related) health services		
Vaccination Programmes	4705139	UNICEF, WHO
Maternal health (inpatient and preg and lact)	8127	UNFPA
Maternal Health Reproductive Age 15 49 years	2318	UNFPA
Nutrition programmes Children 6 59 Months	483	UNICEF
HIV services among key populations and people living with HIV	184426	UNAIDS
Indicator 1.2 Number of health facilities that received UN support to maintain essential immunization services since COVID 19 disruptions		
Immunization catch up sessions, including through outreach and mobile services	463	UNICEF
Provision of Immunization training and supplies	110	UNICEF
Reporting on vaccine stock status	21	UNICEF
Supporting surveillance of vaccine preventable disease	77	UNICEF
Indicator 1.3 Whether the country is protecting health services and systems, Yes/No, with a set of core essential services to be maintained during the COVID 19		
With multisectoral mental health and psychosocial support technical working group	Yes	WHO
Indicator 1.4 Number of community health workers receiving UN support to maintain essential services since COVID 19 disruptions		
Support to community health workers (Provision of PPE and RCCE material)	125214	UNICEF, UNHCR
Support to community health workers (Rapid training to provide essential MNCH services)	11333	UNICEF
Other	17797	UNICEF
Pillar 2 - PROTECTING PEOPLE: Social protection and basis services		

SERP Pillar	Total Q3 +Q4 2020	Contributing agencies
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Indicator 2.1 Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services

Total WASH	201206	UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, UNDP
Migrants, Refugees, stateless and internally displaced persons	80177	IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP
Persons with disabilities	9	UNICEF

Indicator 2.2 Number of children supported with distance/home based learning

TOTAL	3376371	UNICEF, UNESCO
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Indicator 2.4 Whether the country has measures in place to address gender based violence (GBV) during the COVID 19 pandemic, which, Yes/No, Integrate violence prevention and response into COVID 19 response plans

Integrate violence prevention and response into COVID 19 response plans	Yes	UNDP
Raise awareness through advocacy and campaigns with targeted messages to both women and men	Yes	ILO

Indicator 2.5 Number of beneficiaries of social protection schemes and services related to the COVID 19 pandemic

Female Cash transfer programmes	8994	UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, IOM, UNFPA
Male Cash transfer programmes	2227	UNDP, FAO, IOM
Cash transfer programs total	11221	UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, IOM, UNFPA
Female Psychosocial support services	12067	UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, UNFPA
Male Psychosocial support services	13896	UNICEF, IOM, UNDP
Psychosocial support services total	25963	UNDP, UNICEF, IOM, UNFPA
Cash for productivity transfer programs total	1372	UNFPA, IOM

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Pillar 3 ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: Protecting jobs, small and medium sized enterprises, and vulnerable workers in the informal economy

Indicator 3.2 Number of private sector companies and formal and informal sector workers supported during and after the COVID 19 pandemic

Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs)	21	UNDP
Private sector companies, excluding MSMEs	11	ILO
Formal sector workers	363	ILO

Indicator 3.4 Number of direct beneficiaries of food supply protection regimes that are designed to protect livelihoods by addressing food supply bottlenecks

Protect livelihoods by addressing food supply bottlenecks	6674	FAO
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Pillar 4 MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

Indicator 4.1 Whether the country undertook socio economic impact assessments in response to the COVID 19 crisis, with a focus on vulnerable groups, directed at risk populations, Yes/No

SERP Pillar	Total Q3 +Q4 2020	Contributing agencies
Macro-meso economic needs assessment	Support for socioeconomic assessments including focus on vulnerable groups	UNDP, FAO, UNICEF, ILO, UNIDO
Fiscal and public debt assessment		
Human impact needs assessment for at risk populations		
Labour market impact assessment		
Multi-sectoral and sectoral needs assessment		

Indicator 4.2 Whether the country is implementing policies informed by socio economic impact assessment, directed at risk populations

Labour market policies, including food security assessment	Yes	UNDP, FAO
Socio-economic policy including employment		

Pillar 5 - SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Indicator 5.1 Number of organizations benefiting from institutional capacity building so that governments, employers' and workers' organizations can work

Employers' and business organizations	15	ILO
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Indicator 5.2 Number of community based organisations capacitated to respond to and mitigate the pandemic, fight against COVID 19 related domestic

Total	661	UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP, UN Habitat
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Indicator 5.3 Number of social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement spaces facilitated with participation of at risk populations and groups

Total, sub national and national spaces for dialogue	5	ILO
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Reference: Data submitted by UN Philippines agencies in October 2020 and January 2021

Annex B.

UN Agencies' resource contributions to programming priorities

Table B.1 Estimated UN Agency funds (USD) for programming priorities of the SEPF 2020-2023

AGENCIES	PEOPLE				PROSPERITY AND PLANET				PEACE				OVERALL			
	Core Funds	Non-Core Funds	Add'l funds to be Leveraged and/or Reprogramme	Sub-total	Core Funds	Non-Core Funds	Add'l funds to be Leveraged and/or Reprogramme	Sub-total	Core Funds	Non-Core Funds	Add'l funds to be Leveraged and/or Reprogramme	Sub-total	Core Funds	Non-Core Funds	Add'l funds to be Leveraged and/or Reprogramme	Sub-total
IFAD ^a	798.000	3.500.000	2.500.000	6.798.000	1.596.000	7.000.000	5.000.000	13.596.000	798.000	3.500.00	2.500.000	6.798.000	3.192.000	14.000.000	10.000.000	27.192.000
ILO	433.250	1.404.095		1.837.345	1.673.250	59.328.239		61.001.489	355.00	7.809.523		8.164.523	2.461.500	68.541.857		71.003.357
FAO	250.000	9.000.000	20.000.000	29.250.000	250.000	10.000.000	30.000.000	40.250.000	250.00	15.000.000	25.000.000	40.250.000	750.000	34.000.000	75.000.000	109.750.000
IOM	320.000	257,600 ^c	1.273.00	1.850.600												
UNAIDS	6887.000	40.553.000		41.240.00	687.000	124.254.000		124.941.000	687.00	36.113.000		36.800.000	2.061.000	200.920.000		202.981.000
UNDP ^d	12.220.000	1.580.000	24.000.000	37.800.000						2.030.000	2.770.000	4.800.000	12.220.000	3.610.000	26.770.000	42.600.000
UNFPA																
UN Habitat						3.760.164	SHIELD Project	3.760.164		6.881.006		6.881.006		10.641.170		10.641.170
UNEP ^e																
UNESCO	30.000			30.000	25.000	70.000	135.000	230.000	25.00	60.000		85.000	80.000	130.000	135.000	345.000
UNHCR		412.944		412.944		97.494		97.494		3.910.002		3.910.002		4.420.440		4.420.440
UNICEF	13.904.000	56.004.000	14.033.685	83.941.685						19.836.000	4.182.000	24.018.000	13.904.000	75.840.000	18.215.685	107.959.685
UNIDO	25.000	3.694.780	23.350.000	27.069.780	103.542	30.524.914	135.232.285	165.860.741	31.400	2.806.770	1.227.285	4.065.455	159.942	37.026.463	159.809.570	196.995.975
UNODC		5.300.107	2.300.000	7.600.107		720.000	800.000	1.520.000		2.909.999	2.740.000	5.649.999		8.930.106	5.840.000	14.770.106
UNOPS	199.851	5.670.000	82.749.545	88.616.396			10.688.832	10.688.832		12.518.000		12.518.000	199.851	18.188.000	93.438.377	111.826.228
UN Women		300.000	200.000	500.000		300.000	200.000	500.000		700.000	300.000	1.000.000			700.000	700.000
OCHA																
WFP		7.806.179		7.806.179		5.674.450		5.674.450		5.060.458		5.060.458		18.541.086		18.541.086
WHO	10.887.017	704.291		11.591.308									10.887.017	704.291		11.591.308
TOTAL	39,754,118	136,186,995	170,406,230	346,347,343	4,334,792	241,729,261	182,056,117	428,120,170	2,146,400	119,134,757	38,719,285	160,000,442	45,915,310	495,493,413	389,908,632	931,317,355

Table B. 2 UN Agencies' resource contributions to the PFSD and to the SEPF by Pillar 2020-2023

PILLARS	CORE Funds		NON-CORE Funds		Repurposed/ Leveraged	TOTAL	
	PFSD	SEPF	PFSD	SEPF	SEPF	PFSD	SEPF
People	37.363.000	39.754.118	133.294.000	136.186.995	170.406.230	170.656.000	346.347.343
Prosperity & Planet	2.713.000	4.334.792	202.518.000	241.729.261	182.056.117	205.230.000	428.120.170
Peace	2.124.000	2.146.400	128.616.000	119.134.757	38.719.285	130.740.000	150.000.442
Total	42.199.000	45.915.310	464.428.000	495.493.413	389.908.632	506.627.000	931.317.355

Notes:

- From 16 agencies (FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women, WFP and WHO)
- IFAD not reflected as it distorts the figures and complicated treatment
- OCHA has no financial programmatic resource contribution; UNEP unable to provide country-specific funding details

Annex C.

SEPF Results framework

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA PEOPLE

SEPF Outcome Statement 1

The most marginalized, vulnerable, and at-risk people and groups benefit from more inclusive and quality services and live in more supportive environments where their nutrition, food security, health and life-long learning are ensured and protected.

Focus Areas	Outcome Indicators	Participating UN agencies
1.1. Holistically address the social determinants of people's health and strengthen health systems for enhanced health outcomes	Indicator 1 Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 <i>Baseline: 33.4% (2015) Target: 28.8% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: National Nutrition Survey</i>	FAO UNFPA UNICEF
1.2. Strengthen the education and training system and bridge the educational divide	Indicator 2 Prevalence of wasting among children under five <i>Baseline: 7.1% (2015) Target: <5.0% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: National Nutrition Survey</i>	ILO IOM UNAIDS
1.3. Enhance food and nutrition security	Indicator 3 Maternal mortality ratio (number of deaths per 100,000 live births) <i>Baseline: 95 (2016) Target: 108 (2022)</i> <i>Data source: UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group Civil Registration and Vital Statistics</i>	UNDP UNIDO UNODC WFP
1.4. Shore social protection systems	Indicator 4 Adolescent birth rate (aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group <i>Baseline: 57.1% (2013) Target: 37% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: National Demographic and Health Survey</i> Indicator 5 Contraceptive prevalence rate for modern family planning <i>Baseline: 37.6% (currently married; 2013) & 23.5% (sexually active unmarried; 2013) Target: 65% (currently married; 2022) & 30% (among women, f reproductive age, 15-49 years old; 2022)</i> <i>Data source: National Demographic and Health Survey</i> Indicator 6 Proportion of households meeting the 100% recommended energy intake <i>Baseline: 31.7% (2015) Target: 32.2% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: National Nutrition Survey</i> Indicator 7 Number of newly diagnosed HIV cases <i>Baseline: 9,264 (2016) Target: 18,900 (2022)</i> <i>Data source: Department of Health – HIV/AIDS & ART Registry of the Philippines</i> Indicator 8 Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases ((number of deaths per 100,000 population aged 30-70 years old) <i>Baseline: 462.5 (2016) Target: 367.1 (2022)</i> <i>Data source: Philippine Health Statistics/Department of Health</i> Indicator 9 Percentage of Grade 12 learners attaining nearly proficient level or better in core Senior High School areas <i>Baseline: 10% (2018) Target: 28% (2022-2026)</i> <i>Data source: Basic Education Exit Assessment</i> Indicator 10 Certification rate of technical and vocational education and training graduates <i>Baseline: 91.3% (2016) Target: 92% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority</i> Indicator 11 Percent share of GDP on social protection expenditure <i>Baseline: 1.7% (2016) Target: 3.7% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: Department of Budget and Management</i>	WHO UNESCO UN WOMEN

SEPF Outcome Statement 2

Urbanization, economic growth, and climate change actions are converging for a resilient, equitable, and sustainable development path for communities.

Focus Areas	Outcome Indicators	Participating UN agencies
<p>2.1. Integrate green and climate lens in job-rich recovery efforts</p>	<p>Indicator 1 Proportion of local government that adopt and implement climate change – disaster risk reduction enhanced Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and Comprehensive Development Plans (CDPs), Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs), and local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategy.</p>	<p><i>UNDP</i> <i>UNIDO</i> <i>ILO</i> <i>FAO</i> <i>WFP</i></p>
<p>2.2. Strengthen resilience in all sectors and all levels of government</p>	<p>Baseline (2016): <i>CLUPs (34% of 1,634 municipalities and cities);</i> <i>CDPs (2.26% of 1,634 municipalities and cities);</i> <i>LCCAPs (68.18% of 1,634 municipalities and cities);</i> <i>Local disaster risk reduction and management plans (93.15% of 1,634 municipalities and cities)</i></p>	<p><i>IOM</i> <i>UNHCR</i> <i>UN-Habitat</i></p>
<p>2.3. Strengthen the capacity of cities to develop resilient and socially inclusive urbanized communities</p>	<p>Target: Increasing (2022) Data source: <i>Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB)/Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD); Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG); Climate Change Commission (CCC) and Office of Civil Defense (OCD)</i></p>	<p><i>IFAD</i> <i>UNICEF</i> <i>UNFPA</i></p>
<p>2.4. Leverage untapped potential for agriculture-based inclusive growth and sustainable agri-food systems</p>	<p>Indicator 2 Percentage of jobs and industries adopting green technologies and practices to total number of industries</p> <p>Baseline: <i>To be confirmed Target: To be determined</i> Data source: <i>Philippine Statistics Authority</i></p>	<p><i>UNOPS</i> <i>UNEP</i> <i>ITC</i> <i>UNDRR</i></p>
<p>2.5. Strengthen environmental protection and curb illegal wildlife trade</p>	<p>Indicator 3 GHG emissions per sector (million MT CO2e) (Energy, Industry, Agriculture, LUCF, Waste, Transport)</p> <p>Baseline (2010):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Energy - 55.7;</i> • <i>Industrial - 11;</i> • <i>Agriculture - 47.8;</i> • <i>LUCF - 83.2;</i> • <i>Waste - 15.3;</i> • <i>Transport - 25.3</i> 	
<p>2.6 Mobilize innovative finance for green, climate and disaster risk reduction and inclusive investments</p>	<p>Target: Decreasing (2022) Data source: <i>National Communication to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i></p>	
<p></p>	<p>Indicator 4 Percent of total budget of national government agencies and local government units that respond to climate change adaptation and mitigation</p> <p>Baseline: <i>5% for national government agencies (2015)</i> <i>Local government units- To be determined</i></p> <p>Target: Increasing (2022) Data source: <i>CCC climate budget tagging reports; Department of Environment and Natural Resources Programme Convergence Budgeting</i></p>	
<p></p>	<p>Indicator 5 Area of protected areas with high biodiversity values effectively managed</p> <p>Baseline: <i>Marine (Poor: 3.4 M ha; Fair: 0; Satisfactory: 112,822 ha; Good: 0; Excellent: 0)</i> <i>Terrestrial (Poor: 2.2 M ha; Fair: 970,502 ha; Satisfactory: 1.3 M ha; Good: 1.1 M ha; Excellent: 112,822 ha)</i></p>	
<p></p>	<p>Target (2022): <i>Marine (Poor: 1.9 M ha; Fair: 2.2 M ha; Satisfactory: 42.1 M ha; Good: 0; Excellent: 0)</i> <i>Terrestrial (Poor: 1.4 M ha; Fair: 68,707 ha; Satisfactory: 844,239 ha; Good: 972,162 ha; Excellent: 42,136 ha)</i></p> <p>Data source: <i>Philippine Development Plan; Department of Environment and Natural Resources</i></p>	

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA PEACE

SEPF Outcome statement 3

Through inclusive and accountable governance, decent employment generation and essential services of health, education, security, justice, protection and recovery systems reach the most vulnerable in Mindanao, resulting in socially cohesive and resilient communities.

Focus Areas	Outcome Indicators	Participating UN agencies
<p>3.1. Respond to COVID-19 and accelerate inclusive development for peace in Mindanao</p>	<p>Indicator 1 Poverty incidence in BARMM <i>Baseline: 53.6% (2018) Target: 49.6% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: Philippine Statistics Authority</i></p>	<p><i>IOM</i> <i>ILO</i> <i>UNIDO</i></p>
<p>3.2. Support normalization and political tracks of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro</p>	<p>Indicator 2 Percentage of conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable barangays rehabilitated <i>Baseline: 10% (2016) Target: 40% (2022)</i> <i>Data source: Concerned agencies, Bangsamoro Development Plan</i></p>	<p><i>UNDP</i> <i>FAO</i> <i>UNHCR</i></p>
<p>3.3. Reduce community-based conflicts, address community security and strengthen community economic empowerment</p>	<p>Indicator 3 Number of Seal of Good Local Governance Passers in BARMM (Local Government Units) <i>Baseline: 28 (2019) Target: 50 (2022)</i> <i>Data source: Ministry of the Interior and Local Government Report</i></p>	<p><i>UNFPA</i> <i>UN Women</i> <i>WFP</i> <i>IFAD</i> <i>UNICEF</i> <i>UN-Habitat</i> <i>UNODC</i> <i>OCHA</i></p>

Endnotes

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UN
environment
programme



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UNFPA



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



UNHCR
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unicef
for every child



unicri
United Nations
Interregional Crime and Justice
Research Institute



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



OCHA
United Nations Office
for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs



UNODC
United Nations Office on
Drugs and Crime



UNOPS



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



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