



UNITED NATIONS
PHILIPPINES



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COUNTRY ANALYSIS



2025 UPDATE

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(Data as of 30 November 2025; Document version 2 February 2026)

Introduction

The United Nations Country Analysis (UNCA) for the Philippines is an independent, collective, and integrated analysis by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) of the country's context for sustainable development. The new generation UNCTs are expected to collectively establish and maintain an independent UN analytical function that provides ongoing analysis of the complex development challenges that is systemic, forward-looking, and human-centred. As part of the UN analytical function, UNCTs are also expected to conduct a horizon scanning exercise at least annually over the life of the CF.¹

A comprehensive [Common Country Analysis \(CCA\)](#) was completed by the UNCT in June 2023 to provide the analytical basis for the formulation of the [Philippine 2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(United Nations CF or CF\)](#) that was signed in October 2024. A CCA 2024 Update was completed by the UNCT in December 2024.

Scope

The circumstances for undertaking the 2025 country analysis of the Philippines sustainable development journey were unique given the plethora of in-depth analysis of major changes, development indicators, and emerging trends that were captured during the year through the following:

1. [Philippine SDG 2024 Pace of Progress Results](#) as of February 2025
2. [Philippines Voluntary National Review \(VNR\) 2025](#) published in June 2025
3. [2025 Statistical Indicators of Philippine Development](#) released in July 2025
4. [Philippines Development Plan 2023-2028 \(PDP\) Midterm Update](#) published in August 2025
5. [Philippines Development Forum 2025](#) held on 6 October 2025.

The UNCA 2025 summarizes the UNCT's reflections on the key changes in the context and trends in sustainable development indicators, and their implications for UN programming, approaches, and areas of engagement. The report tags updates that are relevant to the six transitions that have catalytic effects across all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to highlight the multidimensional and integrated nature of the analysis.² The report will build on, and not duplicate, the depth of the analysis present in the 2024 Update which documented the shifts in the country context from January 2023 until December 2024. More importantly, it does not duplicate the level of analysis already available in the documents listed above.

The UNCA 2025 is based on published information and data available on or before 30 November 2025. The UN analytical function is provided by United Nations staff from resident and non-resident agencies, funds and programmes operating in the Philippines, under the leadership of the internal UN Philippines coordination groups and oversight of the UNCT.

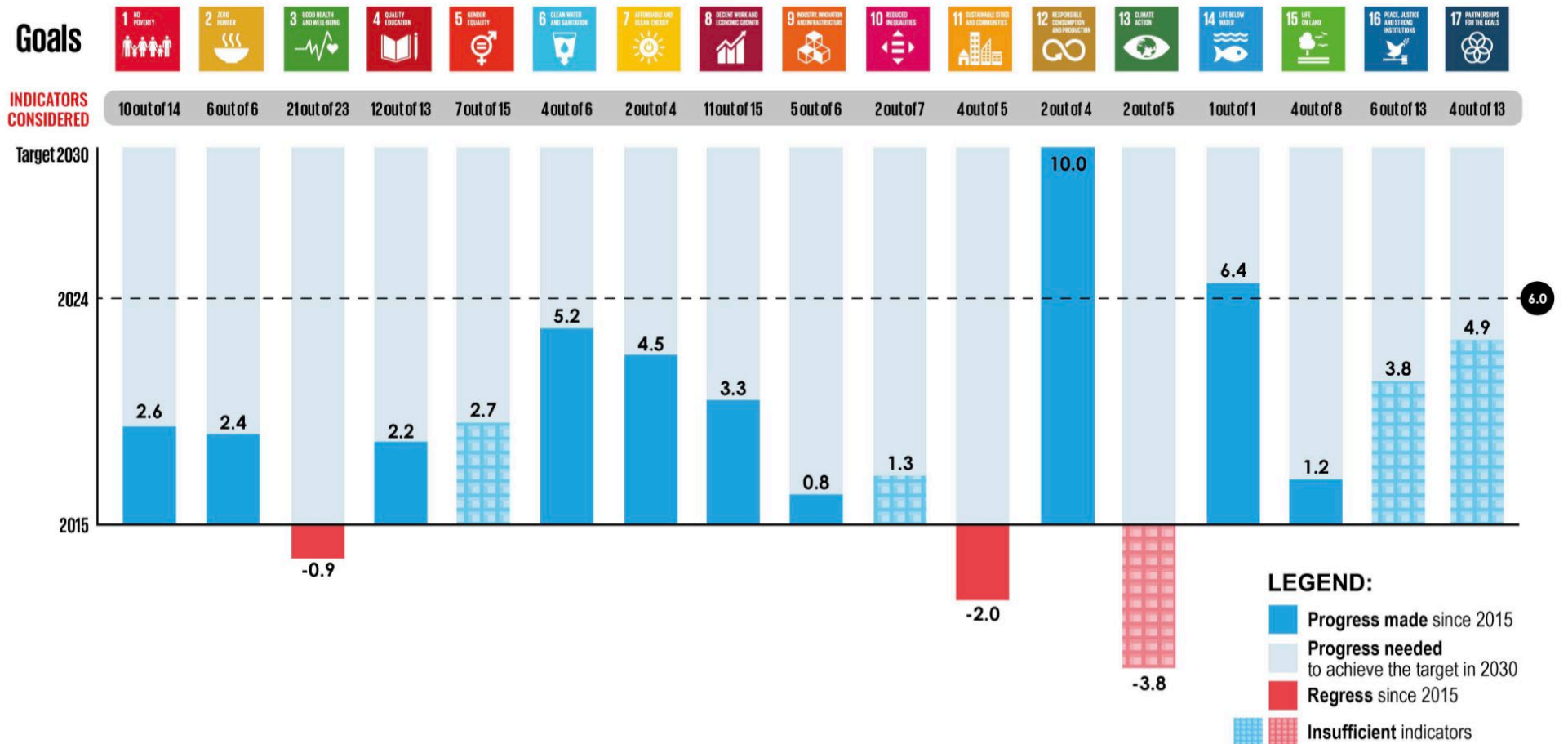
¹ The Cooperation Framework Guidance Version 3.0 (October 2024) refers to a "UN country analysis (UNCA)" instead of the "Common Country Analysis (CCA)" used in previous versions of the guidance document.

² Six transitions: (1) food systems; (2) energy access and affordability; (3) digital connectivity; (4) education; (5) jobs and social protection; and (6) climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. See "[Six Transitions: Investment Pathways to Deliver the SDGs \(September 2023\)](#), UNSDG."

SECTION 1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

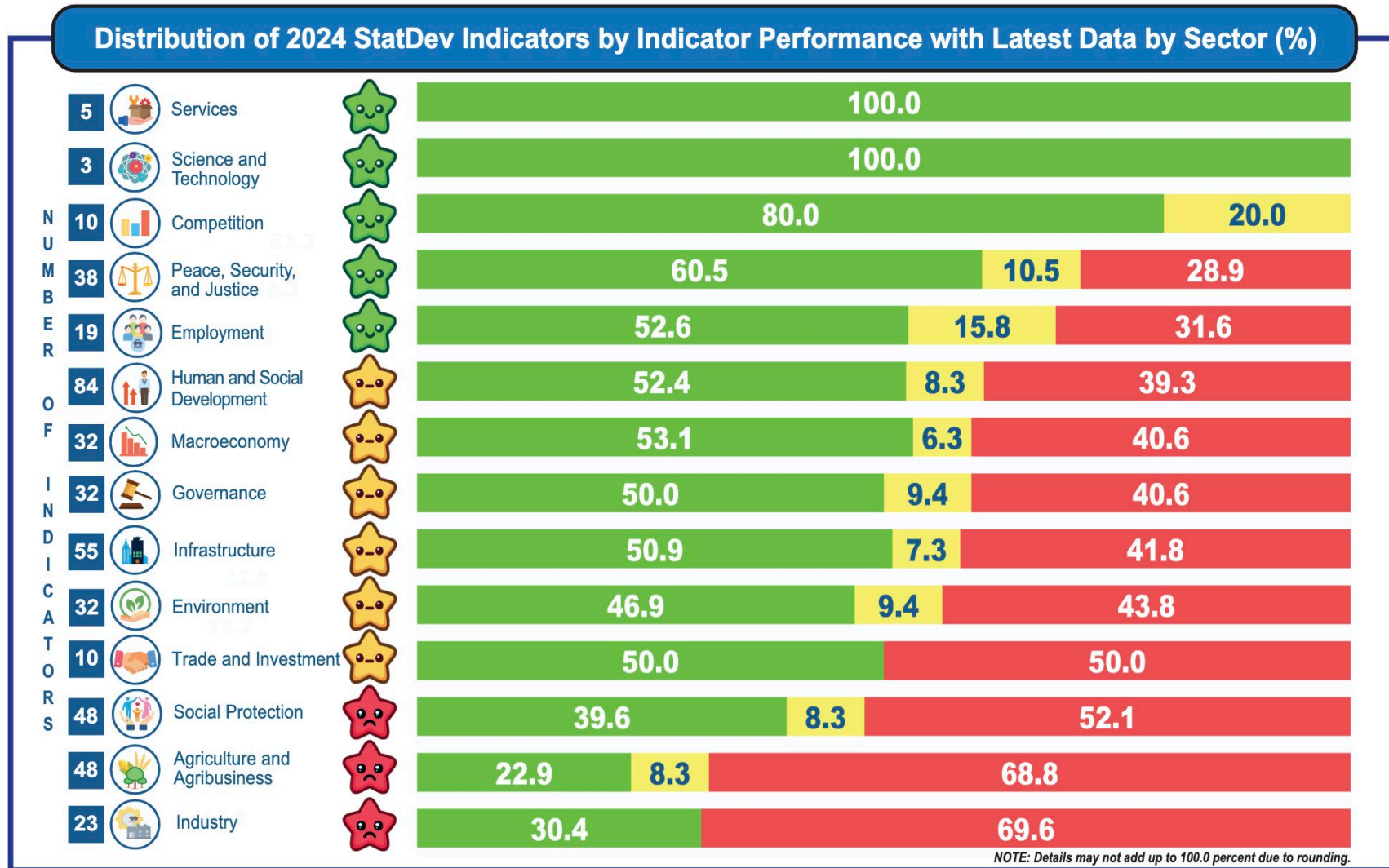
A. SDG Pace of Progress

The Current Status Index featured below assesses the current state of progress on SDGs since 2015 based on the [SDG 2024 Pace of Progress Results Report](#) released by the Philippine government in March 2025. The next release is anticipated in Q1 2026.



B. Stat Dev Indicators

The Statistical Indicators on Philippine Development (StatDev) aim to monitor the likelihood of achieving economic and social development goals in the PDP. The government released the [2024 Update](#) in July 2025.



C. UN CF Outcome-level Performance Indicators

The Results Framework of the United Nations CF tracks progress of selected Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 outcome indicators that are aligned with the UN CF outcomes. **Colour legend:** Latest data sourced from StatDev, with colours indicating “Likelihood of Achieving the PDP target” by 2028 as assessed by PSA. [Green (High); Yellow (Medium); Low (Red)]. Gray cells indicate data not included in StatDev but tracked by UN entities from other official sources.

<i>UN CF Performance Indicators</i>		<i>Latest data available*</i>
Strategic Priority: Human capital development, inclusion, resilience building		
Outcome 1: By 2028, all people, especially those at risk of being left behind, have increased resilience to economic, climatic, disaster, and public health risk through improved, equitable, and gender-responsive access to and utilization of quality social services, social protection, healthy habitat, and enhanced good governance and peace	1.1. Maternal mortality ratio decreased (per 100,000 live births)	154 (2021)
	1.2. Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	22 (2022)
	1.3. Number of new HIV infections per 1,000 population	0.27 (2025)
	1.4. Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age decreased (%)	23.6% (2023)
	1.5. Prevalence of food insecurity in population decreased (%)	Severe: 2.70 (2023) Moderate to Severe: 31.4 (2023)
	1.6. Prevalence of malnutrition for children under five years (wasting and overweight) (%) decreased	Wasting: 5.6* (2023) Overweight: 3.7* (2023)
	1.7. Proportion of learners achieving at least “Proficient” in the National Achievement Test - Mathematics increased (%)	Grade 3: 50 Grade 6: 56 Grade 10: -- Grade 12: 11 (2024)
	1.8. Proportion of learners achieving at least “Proficient” in the National Achievement Test - Reading increased (%)	Grade 3: 66 Grade 6: 69 Grade 10: -- Grade 12: 15 (2024)
	1.9. Poverty incidence decreased (%)	15.5 (2023)
	1.10. Total government expenditures on social protection programs as a percentage to gross domestic product (%)	3.05 (2024)
	1.11. Percentage of families covered with social insurance (%)	86.8 (2022)
	1.12. Death rate due to road traffic injuries (per 100,000 population)	11.6 (2023)
	1.13. Corruption Perception Index	38 (2024)
	1.14. Open Budget Index score (%)	75 (2023)
	1.15. Percentage of children (aged 1-14 years) who have experienced at least one form of discipline	59 (2022)
	1.16. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	11.9 (2022)
	1.17. Congestion rate in jail and prison facilities reduced	Jail: 291 Prison Facilities: 248 (2024)
	1.18. Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments	Managerial: 53% (2023) LGU: 29% (2023)

<i>UN CF Performance Indicators</i>		<i>Latest data available*</i>
	1.19. Percentage of implementation of peace agreements completed: Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro	47 (2024)
Strategic Priority 2: Sustainable economic development, innovation, and decent work		
Outcome 2: By 2028, all people benefit from a more integrated, innovative, inclusive, and sustainable economy that generates decent work and livelihood opportunities	2.1 Unemployment rate decreased (%)	3.8 (2024)
	2.2 Gross Value Added (GVA) growth rate in manufacturing sector increased (%)	3.70 (2024)
	2.3 Growth in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (AFF) Gross Value Added (GVA) increased (% in constant prices)	-1.5 (2024)
	2.4 Female labour force participation rate increased (%)	51.8 (2024)
	2.5 Global Competitiveness Index (GCI)	Rank 52; Score: 52.64 (2024)
	2.6 PH foreign direct investments (FDI) to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio increased (%)	2.0 (2024)
	2.7 Volume of digital payments over total retail payment transactions in the country (%)	52.8 (2023)
	2.8 Revenue generated by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) increased	11,739,351 million (2022)
	2.9 Number of agricultural and residential land free patents issued to women and men increased	41,936 (2024)
	2.10 Employment generated from the services sector increased ('000s)	1,194 (November 2024p - November 2023f)
	2.11 Percentage of youth not in employment, education, and training (NEET) decreased (%)	12.8 (2024)
	2.12 Global Innovation Index (GII)	53rd (2024)
Strategic priority 3: Climate action, environmental sustainability and disaster resilience		
Outcome 3: By 2028, all people benefit from just transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient development, sustainable management of environment, natural resources and biodiversity, and strengthened resilience to disasters and natural hazards	3.1 Number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	Deaths: 0.84 Missing: 0.12 Directly affected: 26,803.33 (2024)
	3.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies	51 (2023)
	3.3 Area of marine protected areas under National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and other priority coastal and marine conservation areas effectively managed	"Excellent: 2,041,467 Good: 435,843 Fair: 6,446 Poor: 0 (all 2024)
	3.4 Forest area as a proportion of total land area	24.24 (2023)
	3.5 Area of terrestrial protected areas, including inland wetlands and caves under NIPAS system effectively managed increased (hectares)	Excellent: 1,009,116 Good: 683,695 Fair: 6,167 Poor: 0 (all 2024)
	3.6 Percentage of plastic product footprint recovered	23 (2024)
	3.7 Share of renewable energy (RE) in the power generation mix increased (%)	31.70 (2023)
	3.8 Percentage of highly urbanized and other major urban centres within ambient air quality guideline values for particulate matter (PM) 10 and 2.5	65 (2024)
	3.9 Green, Social, and Sustainability Bonds issued (USD billion)	15.30 (2024)

*** For UNCT to note:** These two indicators and the progress towards the Philippines Plan of Action (PPAN) targets and SDGs are different. For SDG indicators: (a) Overweight = decreased from 3.9 in 2021 to 3.7 in 2023; and (b) Wasting= minimal to no change from 5.5 in 2021 to 5.6 in 2023.

SECTION 2: UPDATES ON UN CF OUTPUT AREAS

Strategic Priority 1: Human capital development, inclusion and resilience building



Output 1.1: Health

a) Major developments and changes in context

- Challenges related to **health budgetary requirements** persist, but systemic issues pose significant hurdles. Complexities in the health system (such as high degree of decentralization and 50% of services delivered through the private sector) make it challenging to scale up successful health programmes to a national level. International financial institutions (IFIs) –Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank (WB)—have increased investments in the health sector, with ADB focusing on national and hospital-centred initiatives and WB on local health systems.
- **Maternal mortality** remains a critical public health challenge, with DOH targeting a reduction to 64 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030. DOH has strengthened the Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) system, which ensures timely reporting, review, and analysis of maternal and neonatal deaths. MPDSR facilitates identification of preventable factors and guides corrective actions at facility and community levels, promoting accountability and quality improvement. While national reports are not yet published regularly, the integration of MPDSR data into health information systems and its use for quality improvement initiatives reflect DOH's commitment to reducing maternal deaths through evidence-based interventions and systemic reforms.
- **Neonatal mortality** has shown slow progress over recent years, despite ongoing efforts to improve maternal and newborn health. DOH aligns with the global SDG target of reducing neonatal mortality to 12 per 1,000 live births by 2030, but there is still no formal national neonatal mortality rate target, which limits accountability and strategic focus. Government initiatives include strengthening MPDSR, improving quality of care standards, and expanding postnatal follow-up systems. Gaps remain in scaling up small and sick newborn care and linking MPDSR findings to systemic improvements. Accelerating progress will require formalizing targets, implementing a national scale-up plan, and leveraging MPDSR data for evidence-based interventions.
- On **immunization**, the Philippines reported 4,743 measles-rubella cases in 2025 as of November 8, marking a 36% annual increase. Of these, 75% of confirmed cases occurred among children aged nine years and below. The most affected regions were the National Capital Region (NCR, 1,027 cases), BARMM (733), CALABARZON (503), Northern Mindanao, and Zamboanga Peninsula (284), with NCR accounting for 22% of all cases nationally. The government has confirmed ongoing endemic transmission and a sustained upward trend in cases over the past year, citing that 81% of provinces have suboptimal measles-containing-vaccine-first dose coverage and weak surveillance, placing the country at high risk of a large-scale outbreak. Despite multiple outbreak response immunizations in 2024–2025, coverage remains below target. To address this situation,

DOH plans to conduct a high-quality, non-selective Measles-Rubella Supplementary Immunization Activity in 2026, lowering the target age in line with WHO guidance targeting 10.4 million children aged 6–59 months; however, immediate intensified catch-up immunization and outbreak response activities are urgently needed in high-burden areas to curb mortality and morbidity before the national campaign begins.

- The government continued rolling out the **Universal Health Care (UHC)** Law, expanding UHC integration sites from 58 in 2020 to 104 in 2025, covering 87% of target LGUs. These sites link barangay health stations, rural health units, and hospitals into coordinated networks for better service delivery. Despite progress, challenges remain: fragmented systems, uneven LGU capacity, and gaps in health financing and workforce distribution. Government spending covered only 44.7% of total health expenditures in 2024, leaving households to shoulder 42.7% out-of-pocket costs. PhilHealth reforms in 2025 introduced a pivot to preventive care, expanded Konsulta packages, and aimed to reduce out-of-pocket spending to 25–35%. Even though more funds were spent in health, the improvements in the health outcomes were modest, highlighting key gaps in the system.
- The DOH launched the **Health Sector Resilience Project**, a five-year initiative (2025-2029) funded by a WB loan aimed at improving climate-resilient provincial health systems to ensure continuity of services during disasters and climate change, advance digital health transformation, enhance governance and workforce capacity at the national and provincial levels.
- **BARMM** has required particular attention given unevenly distributed health facilities, weak referral systems, weak capacity of the health workforce, high turnover of health workers, and cultural barriers to seek health care. BARMM is finalizing its Health Master Plan which will serve as a long-term roadmap for health sector reform. BARMM reinforced UHC rollout in 2025 through technical orientations on Special Health Fund (SHF) and collaborative learning strategies. These efforts aim to build a transparent, efficient, and inclusive health system, with PhilHealth integration and improved financial management at local levels.

b) Implications for UN

- **Funding reductions** such as USAID defunding has had a significant impact on the health sector, particularly in infectious disease control and health emergencies, areas traditionally supported by the US. Development partners have been working to identify alternative resources, though resource mobilization in the current context is challenging.
- The need to **further strengthen health systems** persists, even though there has been progress on improving PhilHealth benefit packages by addressing high out-of-pocket payments and increasing accessibility of quality primary healthcare and solving challenges with logistics and supply chain management for essential health commodities (vaccines, medicines, diagnostics). The **focus of the UNCT should be on the low performing regions with the highest number of the unimmunized children**, and the highest number of maternal, perinatal, newborn and child deaths and morbidities.
- The UNCT should continue to advocate for the **inclusion of the forcibly displaced and stateless persons in the national health programs and services** of the government. Utilizing more inclusive terminologies in national policies to ensure that access to health-related services is accessible to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and Populations at Risk of Statelessness (PAROS).

Output 1.2: Nutrition

a) Major developments and changes in context

- **Child stunting** declined from 26.7 per cent in 2019 to 23.6 per cent in 2023, placing the country on track toward SDG targets. However, **wasting** remained at 5.6 per cent, while **overweight and obesity** are rising at alarming rates, affecting 12.9 per cent of children aged 5–10 years and 12.5 per cent of adolescents aged 10–19 years. The National Nutrition Survey 2023 highlighted declining infant and young child feeding practices, with early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding falling to 61.2 per cent and 50.4 per cent, respectively, and only 13.9 per cent of children meeting the minimum acceptable diet.
- The **approval of the first PhilHealth Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) Benefit Package** that will give more than 100,000 children access to treatment without financial burden. This marks the world's first primary care social health financing package for SAM. Through the benefit package, families with children suffering from SAM receive treatment services worth PHP7,500 (approximately US\$125) for children 0-6 months old and PHP17,000 (US\$280) for children 6-60 months old. This financial support helps relieve families from the burden of added treatment costs. The treatment package provides medical care and ready-to-use therapeutic foods, which help restore weight and treat the underlying infections affecting children with severe acute malnutrition. Families are also supported with ongoing counselling from health professionals who guide them in proper infant and young child feeding and hygiene practices to prevent the recurrence of malnutrition.
- Government plans to **scale up multisectoral stunting prevention interventions** through both domestic financing and the WB-supported loan. Expansion efforts will prioritise municipalities with the highest stunting burden and aim to strengthen the delivery of both nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programmes.
- The passage of RA 12199 strengthened the mandate for an integrated **Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)** system and called for improved coordination and harmonisation across national agencies (including ECCD Council, DSWD, DOH, DepEd and NNC). The law emphasises the delivery of holistic ECCD services—health, nutrition, early learning, responsive caregiving, and child protection—across the first eight years of life.
- **Food insecurity** remains a significant concern, with higher vulnerability in BARMM. Hence the need to strengthen nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes. Government flagship programmes such as Walang Gutom and the School-based Feeding Programme are in process of being enhanced and scaled up to address this.

b) Implications for UN

- Addressing challenges to nutrition requires a **shift in the UNCT's approach to one that considers nutrition targets from a systems perspective**. The approach of UN entities should be multi-sectoral, thus including both nutrition-specific interventions (maternal infant and young child nutrition, micronutrient supplementation, treatment of acute malnutrition, etc.) and other sectoral nutrition-sensitive interventions across agriculture, social protection, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and education systems.

- The rapid rise in **overweight and obesity across all age groups** signals an urgent need for the UNCT to rebalance its support. While undernutrition (stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies) remains a priority, the UNCT should also strengthen national and subnational capacity for the prevention and management of overweight and obesity, recognising its role as a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases.
- The **midterm review of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition 2023–2028** is scheduled for 2026. This presents an opportunity for the UNCT to align support with government priorities and emerging evidence, and to contribute to course corrections needed to accelerate progress toward SDG 2.
- The **ECCD System Act reinforces the need for convergence** of government and UNCT programmes at national and local levels.

Output 1.3: Education

a) Major developments and changes in context

- There remains a **persistent learning crisis**, as the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 Midterm Update highlights that learning recovery efforts have yet to yield significant improvements in outcomes. The 2024 National Achievement Tests showed mixed results – while Grades 3 and 6 scores improved, Grade 12 performance declined. The 2022 PISA assessment indicated a slight improvement in overall ranking, but the country remains among the lowest performing globally across all subjects. Finally, the upcoming SEA-PLM 2024 results (due December 2025) are expected to confirm continued poor literacy and numeracy among Grade 5 students, underscoring the urgent need for effective learning recovery programs. Disasters have caused frequent and prolonged class suspensions that lead to learning disruptions and exacerbation of learning crisis.
- **National education reform efforts progressed** as the Quality Basic Education Plan (QBEDP) 2025–2035 which aims to accelerate reforms in basic education was launched by DepEd in July. The 10-Year National Education and Workforce Development Plan (NatPlan) 2035, led by EDCOM2, is expected by December 2025 or January 2026. EDCOM2’s mandate may be extended beyond its original end date (31 December 2025) to further support legislative alignment across DepEd, TESDA, and CHED under the trifocalized education system. The 2026 Education Budget is projected to exceed ₱1.2 trillion (US\$20.3 billion), reaching 4% of GDP – the internationally recommended minimum. However, efficient and timely spending, equitable allocation, and rigorous monitoring are essential to ensure meaningful impact.
- A **steady increase in the school-based feeding program’s budget** and the corresponding gradual shift towards universal coverage, starting with kindergarteners, confirm the government’s commitment to school feeding as an essential nutrition and education intervention. Major reforms to the program design and implementation are essential to shift towards universal coverage of all primary school children, prioritizing the most vulnerable areas; transition to hot meals moving away from unhealthy food products, ubiquitous after the COVID-19 pandemic; and, importantly, ensure local procurement from smallholder farmers to multiply impacts on the local economy.
- The passage of RA 12199 also mandated **LGUs to invest in and deliver ECCD services**. The ECCD Council, now attached to DILG, continues to be co-chaired by DepEd to ensure

quality Early Childhood Education for children aged 3–4. The legislation aims to support young children’s holistic development and ensure a smooth transition to K–12 formal education, reinforcing the foundational stage of learning.

- In February, DepEd launched the **Education Center for AI Research (E-CAIR)**, the first-ever hub for AI research in education in the Philippines. E-CAIR aims to drive innovation in Philippine education through AI-powered solutions. The Center will focus on revitalizing basic education by developing AI-driven tools that enhance teaching, learning, and school administration. The platform will also leverage data-driven mapping under the Adopt-A-School Program to identify schools with infrastructure needs. E-CAIR can also generate computer-based examination results and offer valuable insights to enhance the qualification system for the National Qualifying Examination for School Heads.
- In October, the Philippines enacted Republic Act No. 12313, institutionalizing the **Lifelong Learning** Development Framework (LLDF) and amending the Philippine Qualifications Framework Act. The law establishes a comprehensive framework to promote lifelong learning across formal, non-formal, and informal education systems.
- The Philippines provided **Rohingya refugees access to the Complementary Pathways (CPath) Programme** as it welcomed the 4th batch of Rohingya refugees, including three from Bangladesh. Pathways Pilipinas, a key initiative under the CPath programme, was launched through a Memorandum of Agreement among seven academic institutions. The programme supports Rohingya scholars by providing educational opportunities that foster personal growth, professional development, and integration into society.

b) Implications for UN

- The newly launched strategic frameworks – QBEDP 2025–2035 and the NatPlan 2035 – call for explicit alignment of all UN agency interventions with national priorities and targets in **support of multi-sectoral approaches and implementation**. The UNCT is encouraged to leverage its unique expertise and resources to foster synergy through inter-agency collaboration in key thematic areas (e.g. school feeding and nutrition education; reproductive health and adolescent well-being; anti-bullying and mental health support; WASH in schools; and climate- and disaster-resilient school infrastructure). Also, the United Nations should contribute to the demonstration of effective implementation of the policies at LGU level with rigorous evidence generation and subsequent scaling up in mind through modelling approaches.
- RA 12313 aligns with SDG 4 on providing inclusive and equitable quality education for all ages. Since the law seeks to facilitate integration of lifelong learning into local governance and community development through partnerships with LGUs, it complements United Nations initiatives that prioritize community empowerment and inclusive education. The **LLDF can be leveraged by the UNCT in supporting inclusive skills development, literacy, digital education and community empowerment** especially in marginalized and underserved communities.
- UNCT should **leverage partnerships** as DepEd and other government agencies are actively seeking to enhance collaboration with civil society, academia, the private sector, and development partners. The Education Forum serves as the central coordination mechanism for stakeholder engagement in the education sector. Efforts are underway to revitalize its structure and thematic working groups to better support reform implementation. In this context, the United Nations is to actively participate in the Forum,

and collectively contribute to policy dialogue, technical assistance, and evidence-based planning. The UNCT can also offer technical expertise to influence the scoping, planning, implementation and monitoring of large-scale loan projects in the sector, by closely working with the line departments and IFIs.

Output 1.4: Social and Child Protection

a) Major developments and changes in context

Current Landscape

- Social assistance programs in the Philippines have been expanded significantly (e.g., Social Pension, Fuel Subsidy, AKAP, Walang Gutom 2027), providing essential protection but without deliberate efforts to create synergies in programme design and implementation have resulting in rising duplication and inefficiencies.
- The 4Ps program is at a turning point, with critical legal reforms pending to lift the arbitrary 7-year coverage limit while ensuring effective need-based coverage and effective links to complementary programs and services to enable graduation pathways.
- Heavy resource concentration in assistance limits progress in labor market interventions, unemployment insurance, and anticipatory planning.
- Social Protection Floor (SPF) remains partially implemented, underscoring the need for an integrated, life-cycle approach.
- The revised case management protocol to address child abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination has been launched.
- Direct access of refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and PAROS to DSWD's programs such as the Assistance to Individuals to Crisis Situations (AICS) and WiSupport Mental Health Program remains continuous.
- The Philippines' National Action Plan to End Statelessness has been updated reflecting six action points to ensure that no child is left without a nationality and a legal identity.
- Implementation of the birth registration initiative for decommissioned combatants and their families has been temporarily suspended until governance issues are resolved.
- The enactment of RA12287 on the Declaration of Imminent Disaster is a landmark legislation to enable anticipatory action before disasters hit, potentially safeguarding lives and livelihoods. Its operationalisation, and the capacity of DSWD to leverage its existing disaster risk management and social protection programs and delivery systems will be crucial for efficient action.

System Enhancements

- Improved targeting & registries: Integration of CBMS and POPCEN, recalibration of Proxy Means Test, piloting of dynamic social registry (i-Registro), and PhilSys integration to reduce duplication.
- Digitalization: 99% of 4Ps cash cards converted to deposit accounts; partnerships with private sector for financial inclusion and digital payments.

- Disaster Response: Improved logistics and ready-to-eat food packs under Buong Bansa Handa though gaps persist in anticipatory planning and hazard data.
- Social Insurance: SSS coverage rose to 40.76% (2024) but remains below target, leaving informal workers vulnerable.
- Child Protection: The institutionalization of the Model of Intervention with DSWD to address child marriage, focusing on strengthening the child protection system.
- Coverage and Adequacy of Benefits: The 4Ps expanded and integrated its coverage in support of the first 1000 days policy commitment with the provision of monthly PHP350 cash grants to those most vulnerable families with pregnant and lactating mothers or children under 2 years.

Transformation Agenda

- Shift toward transformative SP: rationalize programs, integrate graduation pathways, implement SPF guarantees, and enhance communication strategy.
- Expand digital payment systems, improve targeting, and institutionalize unified dynamic social registry, as a common social protection gateway within and beyond DSWD.
- Integrate climate action and social protection, to protect the most vulnerable from the impact of climate change, and ensure a just transition.
- Shift towards a child protection systems approach, focusing on efficiency gains made by addressing child protection issues through a system rather than individual projects, as prioritized by the 4th National Plan of Action for Children.

Updated Strategy

- Transition from short-term relief to long-term resilience and inclusivity.
- Strengthen foundations (data systems, digital platforms, insurance schemes) and rebalance investments toward adaptive measures and labour market support.

b) Implications for UN

- **Joint advocacy from the UNCT** is essential to support the legislative process underpinning the urgent 4Ps reform. Similarly, a joint UNCT approach can support the design of programmatic pathways to rationalise DSWD programme design and delivery, enhance their impact on poverty reduction and economic inclusion. Crucial pathways between social assistance and social and livelihood insurance are critical to safeguard wellbeing and poverty gains, especially in Philippines shock-prone context.
- Moving towards an adaptive and shock responsive social protection will require **convergent support from UN agencies to enable DSWD to overcome programmatic silos**. Coordination efforts are underway, reaching beyond the UN, to align partners behind government's priorities.
- Similarly, a **joint UNCT engagement to bring DSWD, DOF, DENR and other stakeholders together** to ensure people-centered climate action, protecting and promoting the most vulnerable in particular – most affected by climate change.

Output 1.5: Housing

a) Major developments and changes in context

- An **Expanded 4PH (Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino) Program** was launched upon the assumption of the new DHSUD Secretary in May. Previously, 4PH focused only on the construction of vertical developments or condominium-type projects that did not gain enough traction from targeted beneficiaries due to high cost compared to subdivision-type housing, which remains to be the preference of many homebuyers. The expanded 4PH includes horizontal developments or subdivision-like housing projects, rental housing, incremental housing.
- **Revival of the Community Mortgage Program (CMP)** nationwide covering an initial 34 on-site CMP projects will benefit about 5,000 member-beneficiaries. The CMP is a people-led housing finance and community development program which assists legally organized associations of low-income groups to acquire and develop a tract of land under the concept of community ownership. Its primary objective is to assist residents of blighted or depressed areas to own the lots they occupy, or where they choose to relocate to, and eventually create sustainable and resilient communities.
- For disaster response especially in the context of the recent spate of typhoons and earthquakes, government has focused on **easing the housing loan burden or homeowners affected by disasters** through a moratorium on housing amortizations. It has built modular housing units which will also serve as staging areas for some Expanded 4PH projects.
- DHSUD clarified and **adjusted the housing target** from the oft-quoted original 6.5 million housing need (based on the 2010 Census on Population and Housing) to a projected to reach 3.4 million units housing need by 2028 while the housing backlog stands at 2.2 million units (based on a 2023 study using the 2020 CPH).

b) Implications for UN

- Government issued the call for a **more inclusive participation of partners to address the housing crisis** through the Expanded 4PH Program. All housing options and modalities are open for collaboration with the United Nations. Previously, DHSUD worked only with private developers for the production of housing units to address the housing need.
- Currently, the United Nations works in various areas of shelter response and housing development. UNCT could boost **a more coordinated approach and address the housing and tenure spectrum** from emergency shelter to temporary/transitory shelter to durable solutions and permanent housing integrated in a resilient community, sustainable environment and thriving local economy. Options for value-added engagement include land use and urban planning and design, resilience planning, rural-urban value chains, urban NDC, ecosystem-based adaptation, basic services for informal settlements and slums (WASH, GBV), peace-promotive housing, land and property.

Output 1.6: Governance

a) Major developments and changes in context

- **Transparency and anti-corruption** regained social, political and media attention. Since raised by the President in his State of the Nation Address in July, issues relating to budget

leakages and poor infrastructure delivery have been investigated by the executive and legislative branches of government. There is heightened and increased demand from the public for accountability around the use of public funds, especially in relation to public infrastructure projects.

- On **human rights**, the Philippines underwent a periodic review by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in February. The review highlighted the need for further efforts in areas including right to work, health, education and housing, especially for vulnerable populations. The government continued to implement the Philippine Human Rights Plan (2024-2028). Civil society actors expressed concern about continuing judicial harassment, as well as cases of killings and other violations limiting civic space. In March, former President Duterte was arrested in Manila and transferred to the International Criminal Court to face charges of murder as a crime against humanity.
- A Senate investigation revealed **alleged misuse and abuse of the domestic asylum system** to benefit certain Chinese fugitives. Such misuse could undermine the integrity of the national refugee status determination process.
- In November, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) Parliament approved the **Bangsamoro Labor and Employment Code (BLEC)**, a landmark legislation that institutionalizes a culturally sensitive, inclusive, and rights-based labour governance framework in the BARMM. This legislation was prioritized by the BARMM Government to advance decent work, social justice, and sustainable development, while strengthening peacebuilding in the region. BLEC aims to address long-standing labour market challenges such as high informality, seasonal work, child labour, and youth migration driven by limited opportunities.
- The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Bangsamoro Autonomy Act (BAA) No. 62 on the **Rights of Internally Displaced Persons** of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region signed on 5 March pave the way for the effective implementation of this rights-based approach across all phases of displacement. The adoption of the IRR serves as a crucial step towards safeguarding the rights of and reinforcing the support framework for and with Bangsamoro residents displaced inside and outside BARMM and non-Bangsamoro residents displaced in areas within BARMM.
- **Basic services within the BARMM Special Geographic Areas** to support constituencies remain limited due to capacity constraints. This has affected the implementation of the regular birth registration program. To address this, dialogue with mother municipalities and regional offices of the Philippine Statistics Authority is needed to identify interim measures that will sustain birth registration during the transitional phase.
- The Bureau of Immigration issued Memorandum Circular No. 2025-007 on Prescribing the Immigration Operating Rules and Guidelines on Persons of Concern which provides guidance to all immigration officers, both at the ports of entry and the field offices, and ensure that the **rights of refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons** are upheld.

b) Implications for UN

- Increased attention to transparency and anti-corruption through social, political and media attention presents an opening for the United Nations to **leverage, promote and enhance its work and expertise in the area of governance, human rights and strengthened**

accountability, contributing to the Philippines efforts to fight corruption through accountable institutions, transparency and civil society engagement. To succeed, UNCT engagement must be well-aligned internally, principled and consistent, carefully managed, closely coordinated with national institutions, and focused on building long-term institutional standards.

- The United Nations should provide **consistent and long-term support needed to institutionalize good governance, human rights standards**, and efforts towards accountability. Support should highlight the importance of empowering groups that face vulnerabilities or marginalization, including women, persons with disabilities, and those living in poverty or in remote areas who are often disproportionately impacted.
- BLEC is a major contextual shift that calls for UNCT programming to **align with BARMM's new rights-based, culturally sensitive labour governance framework**. United Nations interventions should support the operationalization of the BLEC through technical assistance, capacity-building for BARMM institutions, and strengthening labour inspection and enforcement mechanisms. The Code identifies systemic challenges that UNCT programming should address, such as high informality, seasonal work, child labour, and youth migration, by promoting decent work opportunities, inclusive skills development, and social protection measures. Furthermore, the United Nations should leverage its convening role to foster tripartite dialogue and ensure that peacebuilding and labour governance objectives are integrated, reinforcing the BLEC's aim to advance social justice and sustainable development in the region.
- The signing of the IRR for BAA No. 62 presents a strategic opportunity for the UN to support **operationalizing the commitments into tangible improvements for displaced communities**, while simultaneously advancing global norms on IDP protection.

Output 1.7: Peace

a) Major developments and changes in context

- A Supreme Court ruling **postponed the BARMM parliamentary elections** – which is part of the Bangsamoro peace process – from October 2025 to no later than March 31, 2026.
- **Delays to the peace process heighten peace-related challenges** such as persistent localized violence, unresolved land disputes, historical grievances, and the risk of renewed conflict as new political dynamics eventually emerge. These risks are further compounded by the marginalization of Indigenous Peoples (IPs), women, and youth, protracted displacement, and lingering impacts of past human rights violations. The evolving security landscape, including vulnerabilities in border and coastal communities and issues such as trafficking in persons, threatens to undermine hard-won gains of the peace process. This calls for sustained national and international attention and investment, risk-tolerant interventions, regular and sustained government financing, and mainstreamed development assistance to aid the eventual post-electoral transition.
- The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) **suspended decommissioning of remaining combatants**, citing that the national government has yet to fully comply with the socio-economic package committed in the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro.

b) Implications for UN

- The UNCT should **review timelines of ongoing technical assistance, policy support, and capacity building to accommodate changes** in the BARMM's priorities and leadership. Moreover, the UN should assess the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of its assistance in relation to these recent developments and adapt accordingly.
- The recent developments **require the UNCT's heightened sensitivity in engaging with all stakeholders**. The United Nations should remain neutral, while continuing to provide various forms of assistance to the government and to former MILF combatants, which includes socio-economic support aligned with the Normalization track of the CAB.
- In addition to the existing portfolio that addresses the broader drivers of conflict and fragility in BARMM, there is **space for UNCT to expand its focus on Transitional Justice and Reconciliation and post-electoral stabilization**. This could include support for land-based mediation, reparations-linked livelihoods, strengthened grievance redress and human rights mechanisms, and inclusive participation of IPs, women, and youth. Complementary investments in youth, education, child protection, and community-level violence prevention can reinforce peace consolidation and social cohesion. Targeted action on border management and trafficking in persons can contribute to stability in high-risk areas. Timely interventions can safeguard peace gains, prevent relapse into conflict, and generate scalable lessons, making BARMM a compelling and high-impact peace and development investment.

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (PSEA)

a) Major developments and changes in context

- Key national and BARMM government agencies **assessed and reviewed the current policies, systems, and practices** on preventing and responding to all forms of sexual misconduct based on the UN PSEA minimum operating standards. Key interventions identified by government representatives led to the formulation of the National and BARMM Strategy Plans on PSEA (2026-2028) and the initial draft legislative bill on PSEA aiming to influence the Codes of Conduct of each entity in the public and private sectors.

b) Implications for UN

- UN agencies are in a key position to **influence the government at various levels in localizing the UN PSEA policy, adopting the PSEA core standards**, and strengthening the overall policy framework of the government. Technical assistance and guidance must be provided in the form of policy formulation and advocacy, development of training modules, and conduct of capacity-building, and generation of evidence-based data to support the design and decision-making around PSEA.

Strategic Priority 2: Sustainable economic development, decent work and innovation

Output 2.1: Economic Transformation

a) Major developments and changes in context



- The **change of NEDA to DEPDev** elevates the economic policy considerations of the government to that of a co-equal department and institutionalizes the mechanisms for planning and coordination in the long term. The explicit enumeration in law of the connection between budget formulation and economic planning further underscores the centrality of this change to the formulation of government policy broadly.
- The **E-Governance Act of 2025** sets the ambition for the driving of the digitalization of bureaucracy and making government services accessible online across all branches of government and all levels (national and local). The passage of this policy represents a paradigm shift in the predominantly paper-based government administration and will bring efficiency gains, improvements to governance, and reduced potential for corruption.
- The Enhanced Fiscal Regime for Large-Scale Metallic Mining Act that **modernizes the fiscal incentives around mining** was passed in September. Innovations in the law include establishing percentages for royalties, providing mechanisms therefore, and creating predictable taxation. The novelty of this policy is in its replacement of a previous patchwork of regulation which made the economic benefits of engaging in mining industry in the Philippines less predictable.
- The **Tatak Pinoy Strategy (TPS)** under RA 11981 was approved in October. The strategy establishes the Philippines' first multi-year national industrial policy that strengthens enterprise competitiveness and global value chain integration. It prioritizes key sectors (e.g. IT-BPM, food and agro-processing, cement and construction materials, semiconductors, electronics, automotive and EV components, etc.) and introduces new government tools (e.g. domestic-preference procurement, green-lane facilitation for strategic investments and exports) and incentives for firm upgrading.
- The government signed the **IRR of the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy (CREATE MORE)** Act in February. The IRR provides clearer guidelines on the transitory rules for pre-CREATE registered business enterprises to continue enjoying their previously granted tax incentives. It also directly addresses investor concerns regarding the issuance of the value-added tax zero-rating certificate. Beyond enhancing incentives, the IRR upholds fiscal prudence in the administration of tax incentives. It prohibits double registration of projects, preventing redundant incentives and ensuring responsible fiscal management.
- The Philippine government adopted in May the **National Artificial Intelligence Strategy of the Philippines (NAIS-PH)** which outlines a detailed roadmap aiming to harness AI for innovation, smart governance, and inclusive growth through five key drivers: infrastructure, workforce, innovation, data governance and policy, and deployment. Digital transformation is a major part of the PDP Midterm Update with focus given to digital infrastructure improvement, enhanced connectivity, and digitalization of public services. Key findings of the AI Readiness Assessment Report for the Philippines highlight structural challenges such as poor digital infrastructure, siloed policymaking, and lagging R&D investments, which slow AI adoption compared to regional peers.
- For agriculture and rural development, President Marcos issued Executive Order 101 directing the **full implementation of the "Sagip Saka Act"** (RA 11321) to help smallholder farmers and fisherfolk reap the full benefits from the law. A key provision exempts direct procurement of agricultural and fishery products from accredited cooperatives from standard bidding processes, streamlining market access for small producers.

- The Philippines has **increased its infrastructure spending** in the past years to reach benchmarks established via economic planning and boost economic growth. However, irregularities were uncovered in 2025 – alleged cases of collusion within executive and legislative branches of government to take advantage of these increases in public works expenditures through a combination of over-pricing, ghost projects and other malpractices – which negatively impacted economic outcomes (e.g. decline of investment and business confidence, operational delays with infrastructure projects).

b) Implications for UN

- The government is paced to grow in its competency through a combination of data-driven and digitally enabled government administration which could lead to further gains in economic growth. The United Nations would **benefit from aligning with these thematic lines** to maximize its productive engagement with government.
- The mining sector in the Philippines has drawn much attention from donor partners and represents a difficult but possible area of work. The United Nation’s **institutional focus on broad social benefits and sustainable practices through the lens of the SDGs** will be an important avenue of inquiry concerning this shift in mining policy going forward.
- UNCT programming should focus on **helping government and enterprises capture the opportunities created by TPS** through targeted support for sector road mapping, MSME upgrading, digital and innovation capacity, and stronger national quality infrastructure, enabling firms to meet standards, benefit from streamlined regulatory processes, and integrate more competitively into domestic and global value chains.
- The adoption of the NAIS-PH requires UNCT programming to **integrate digital innovation and governance** in its approaches. The United Nations should support policy alignment and capacity building for ethical and inclusive AI deployment, strengthen workforce readiness through digital skills development, and promote gender-responsive strategies to ensure equitable access. Additionally, the UNCT should address connectivity gaps and foster data governance frameworks that uphold privacy, security, ethical use while leveraging AI and digital tools to advance sustainable development and protect against potential risks such as job displacement.
- The UNCT can **capitalize on current policy momentum in agriculture** through the Sagip Saka Act to scale inclusive value chains, enhance digital platforms for farm-to-market linkages, and embed climate resilience measures while channelling relevant funding and investments. Programming should continue to support local production to improve trade balances, keep imports at a minimum, and maximize export potential.
- The infrastructure-related corruption cases have increased scrutiny on government, particularly the budget-making process, oversight and efficiency of government spending, and other central mechanisms of governance. These present potential high-impact opportunities and entry points for the United Nations as **an impartial, and confidence-enhancing partner** in politically highly sensitive areas of governance. The UNCT could assist in facilitating productive conversations and providing solution-oriented proposals, expertise and best practices from other relevant settings.

Output 2.2: Investment and Financing

a) Major developments and changes in context

- As part of liberalising the investment laws to attract foreign direct investments, RA 12252 (**Investors' Lease Act Amendments**) was signed into law in September, extending the maximum lease period for private land by foreign investors to 99 years.
- The Board of Investments (BOI) initiated a **gap assessment of the Philippines vis-a-vis the World Trade Organization's Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement (IFD)**. This assessment aims to assess gaps in the domestic framework with the IFD Agreement and identify areas for reform and technical assistance needs. This move signals an intention to strengthen the environment to attract and facilitate operation of investors.
- DBM and DEPDev released Joint Memorandum Circular 2025-1 to strengthen **holistic coordination of resources on key development programs and projects under the Program Convergence Budgeting (PCB)** requiring agencies to align their investment plans with PDP priority clusters and cross-cutting themes.

b) Implications for UN

- The UN has an opportunity to further support the DTI-BOI **align national investment frameworks with the WTI IFD**.
- The UN can facilitate **inter-agency alignment through the PCB mechanism** which supports priority initiatives such as the Agricultural Development Program and the Zero Hunger Program. This integrated approach creates opportunities for blended finance and private sector participation, reinforcing commitments to SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). The recently created PCB on the SDGs which first appeared in the 2025 National Expenditure Program offers broader scope and can further be mobilized within agencies' goals towards 2030.

Output 2.3: Decent Work

a) Major developments and changes in context

- **The Trabaho Para sa Bayan (TPB) Plan 2025–2034**, which serves as the long-term labour market development strategy of the Philippines, was finalized in May. It is anchored on the long-term vision of AmBisyon Natin 2040 and aligns with the PDP and the Philippine Labor and Employment Plan 2023–2028.
- The Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) initiated a series of multi-stakeholder consultations for **the Labor Migration Management Plan (LaMMP)**, a medium-term plan intended for implementation from 2026 to 2028. As the first of its kind, it intends to provide a strategic framework and roadmap reflecting the government's vision for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW). The DMW intends to launch the LaMMP in December 2025.
- DOLE issued Department Order No. 248, series of 2025 maintaining that refugees and stateless persons are exempt from the Alien Employment Permit Requirement and affirms the **inclusion of refugees and stateless persons in all DOLE Employment Facilitation and Livelihood Programs**.

b) Implications for UN

- The TPB Plan strengthens the policy environment for decent work and aligns closely with the UN CF. This alignment enables the UNCT **to move beyond project-based interventions towards co-creation of national employment strategies**, focusing on technical assistance for the TPB Plan itself, including interventions on labour governance, skills development, and climate-resilient labour policies. It opens opportunities for the UNCT to embed its expertise in both M&E and labour market information systems, while supporting just transition and lifelong learning initiatives. The TPB provides a strategic platform for the United Nations to scale impact through integrated policy advice, financing, and system strengthening to advance decent work and inclusive growth nationwide.
- The adoption of the LaMMP will influence the direction of the Philippine government's priorities for OFWs. The UN should **adapt to this new development in its support to government agencies for labour migration governance**, including the DMW and its attached agency, the Overseas Workers Welfare Agency (OWWA).

Output 2.4: Inclusive Economy

a) Major developments and changes in context

- The Philippine government is **advancing a strong trade agenda** amid growing global uncertainties over tariffs. The country concluded negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United Arab Emirates and formally began negotiations with Canada, aiming to finalize them by 2026. The Philippines is also accelerating ongoing FTA negotiations with the European Union, targeting completion before the expiration of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) in 2027. The GSP+ grants developing countries preferential access to the EU market. The urgency is further driven by the expectation that the Philippines will be classified as an upper-middle-income country by 2026.
- BSP issued Memorandum No. M-2025-021 on the **Reminder on Non-Discrimination Against Certain Types of Customers, including Persons of Concern (POC)** in line with access of POC to financial services and connectivity as part of their fundamental rights.
- The **proposed MSME Development Modernization Act** of 2025 has gone through first reading in the Senate. The bill highlights the adoption of a harmonized MSME classification system using two objective and measurable criteria: employment size and annual sales turnover, while removing asset size as a criterion. The bill also offers major improvements to the existing law: 1) establishing a unified MSME Classification and Data System; 2) institutionalizing a national digital skills program for MSMEs and creating a Digital Transformation Fund for small businesses, and improving connectivity for underserved areas, such as rural and geographically isolated areas; 3) strengthening the Small Business Corporation's mandate to offer innovative and non-traditional financing models, making credit more accessible, especially for startups and underserved enterprises; and 4) engagement in government procurement, with provisions for prompt payment and a simplified bidding process.
- BARMM's Ministry of Social Service and Development continues to implement the Layag Badjau program, an integrated **social protection initiative aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of approximately 2,000 Sama Bajau families** in Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Basilan. The program provides a holistic package of services including livelihood seed capital, skills training, monthly rice subsidies, educational assistance for up to two in-

school children, health and hygiene sessions, civil registration support, and intensive case management.

b) Implications for UN

- As the pace of FTAs increases, donor attitudes toward programming geared toward creating enabling conditions to facilitate trade and investment priorities in respective jurisdictions are likely to intensify. There is **strong demand for preparing domestic firms** (particularly export-oriented MSMEs) and the financial sector to be ready to tap these markets. This includes building capacity at firm, intermediate and government levels on how trading under these FTAs, including on market access, export requirements, sustainable reporting standards and raising awareness of rules governing financing flows and digitalization, which are seen as prerequisites for unlocking the full potential of these agreements. UNCT programming efforts can support this endeavour and address government concerns that some existing agreements remain underutilized.
- The UNCT should **continue working with the government and the financial sector** on the implementation of BSP Memorandum No. M-2025-021 and the implementation of Executive Order No. 163, series of 2022.
- The UNCT should **continue facilitating an enabling environment MSMEs, especially vulnerable and marginalized groups** in rural, as well as geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.
- The Layag Badjau Program presents an opportunity for the United Nations to **explore its sustainability within the context of programs currently being implemented by MSSD**. By addressing economic barriers that hinder marginalized Badjau families from securing legal identity, the program complements the Initiative for Promoting Digital Birth Registration. Through livelihood support—including seed capital, skills training, and rice subsidies—the program alleviates financial stress and enables families to prioritize birth registration. Its integrated civil registration assistance and intensive case management reinforce the linkage between legal identity and economic empowerment, making registration more accessible and sustainable. There is significant potential for collaboration—aligning resources and strategies to jointly strengthen economic empowerment and legal identity for populations at heightened risk of statelessness.

Strategic Priority 3: Climate action, environmental sustainability and disaster resilience



Output 3.1: Disaster risk reduction; water, sanitation and hygiene; resilience

a) Major developments and changes in context

- During the SONA, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. instructed government agencies to continue **improving their disaster preparedness and response**. He also cited that schools should not be used as evacuation centres to avoid class interruptions. President Marcos directed the construction of additional dedicated evacuation centres and the further use of technology for disaster preparedness.
- RA 12287 (**Declaration of State of Imminent Disaster Act**) institutionalizes anticipatory action (AA) in disaster risk management. This law empowers national and local authorities to declare a State of Imminent Disaster based on pre-disaster risk assessments, enabling early mobilization of resources, pre-positioning of relief goods, and pre-emptive evacuations. It marks a paradigm shift from reactive response to proactive risk-informed planning, integrating anticipatory measures into DRRM systems. With the climate risk environment of the Philippines, this legislation is critical for reducing loss of life and economic disruption. It also mandates LGUs to embed anticipatory actions in their DRRM plans and budgets, reinforcing local resilience.
- In September, President Marcos signed **Executive Order No. 94, creating an Independent Commission for Infrastructure (ICI)**. The ICI will serve as a fact-finding body mandated to investigate alleged corruption, irregularities, and misuse of funds in government flood control and related projects within the last 10 years. In November, over one million persons were displaced from typhoons, exacerbating scrutiny and the exposure of issues surrounding the flood control projects.

b) Implications for UN

- ODA on disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness remain relevant in the country, especially in rural and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. The United Nations should **reinforce its role in engaging local communities, especially those most vulnerable to displacement**, to participate in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of ODA for disaster risk reduction.
- The UNCT, building on its previous efforts with the government to advocate for the passage of RA 12287 through developing protocols, investment cases, proofs of concept, and piloting AA in the most climate-vulnerable areas, can now play a pivotal role in its implementation. Specifically, the UNCT can **support technical capacity-building for AA, facilitate data-driven early warning systems, and mobilize financing for pre-disaster interventions**. Strengthening government capacity to operationalize forecast-based financing and embedding gender-responsive, community-led approaches into AA frameworks will be critical to making the law effective and sustainable.

- Communities become more vulnerable to waterborne diseases from contamination and poor sanitation, even in evacuation centres. The UNCT should **coordinate its technical assistance to local governments and communities** and address gaps in water, sanitation and hygiene, especially during disasters, and ensure these services are also resilient to disasters. This includes supporting displaced populations with access to critical information and resources to manage climate and environmentally induced health risks.

Output 3.2: Circular Economy, Low Carbon Development

a) Major developments and changes in context

- The Philippines launched the **National Plastic Action Partnership** and continued development of the National Plastic Action Roadmap through new multi-stakeholder processes and public consultations led by DENR. These efforts complement the country's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) law for plastics and reinforce the push for resource-efficient, low-carbon growth.
- The PDP Midterm Update **strengthens climate governance** by introducing new strategies to improve national and local climate-risk data and information systems, scale up sustainable finance from public and private sources, expand natural capital accounting and ecosystem-service valuation, accelerate sustainable consumption and production, and enhance engagement for effective loss and damage response, signalling a shift toward more integrated, data-driven and finance-enabled climate and resilience planning.
- Local governments **advanced environmental governance and circular economy** practices through strengthened solid waste, air quality, promote energy efficiency and renewable energy, and green space initiatives. Nearly half of all barangays now have access to materials recovery facilities, and 49% of cities and municipalities are served by sanitary landfills. The implementation of 978 EPR programs enabled the country to exceed its 20% 2023 recovery target, achieving waste collection rates of 23.7% for rigid plastics and 45.9% for flexible plastics. Air quality improved, with 65% of highly urbanized cities meeting safe PM2.5 and PM10 standards. Over PHP1 billion was allocated for open spaces and active mobility infrastructure in 1,469 LGUs while the DOH advanced Healthy Public Open Spaces and supported bike lanes, walkways, and inclusive mobility policies.
- The **low-carbon and circular economy agenda is being mainstreamed into finance-sector tools** (investment, taxonomies, incentives) not just environmental policy. The Allocation and Impact Report released by DOF indicated that a “circular economy taxonomy” is already under development to expand the scope of sustainable investment activities following the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Guidelines published in 2024.
- The **proposed Low Carbon Economy Investment Bill**, approved on third reading in the House of Representatives, signals a major shift toward a regulated low-carbon transition. The bill requires large emitters to prepare decarbonization plans, introduce emissions ceilings, establish the foundation for an emissions-trading system, and will open pathways for participation in carbon markets and international climate finance.
- The government, with the support of the Development Partners Coordination Group, has undertaken continuous activities on the **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**. Multiple sectoral consultations and partner engagements have been conducted to identify revised unconditional targets and the corresponding policies and measures required to

achieve them. While the country was not be able to submit the updated NDC figures for COP30, the updating process has progressed toward completion.

- DOE released guidelines for the issuance and management of **Carbon Credit Certificates (CCCs) in the energy sector**. The circular provides a foundational framework to assist stakeholders in accessing carbon finance and preparing for future carbon market mechanisms. It identifies eligible projects and programmes that achieve measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions or energy consumption and are capable of generating CCCs, and sets out rules governing their ownership, use, and transfer. The circular also seeks to align national energy policy with climate commitments by supporting the development of carbon-pricing instruments and laying the groundwork for future market mechanisms, including a potential emissions trading system.
- DOLE officially launched the **updated National Green Jobs Human Resources Development (GJ HRD) Plan 2020-2030** in July. Prepared through a multi-stakeholder dialogue process, the plan pushes the strategic vision for a just transition with tighter alignment of national climate policies and priorities with labour market resilience efforts in key employment generating sectors: renewable energy, construction, transport, agriculture, manufacturing and ecotourism.
- The Philippines officially **joined the World Trade Organization (WTO)’s Trade and Environment Structured Sustainability Discussions (TESDD)** in December 2024.

b) Implications for UN

- The government’s advancement of its national plastics and circular-economy agenda creates a timely opportunity for the UNCT to **scale up integrated support for the Philippines by aligning its programming with national plastics and resource-efficiency reforms**, strengthening EPR implementation, and mobilizing finance.
- UNCT programming should respond to new strategies in the PDP Midterm Update by **supporting the government strengthen the systems and institutions needed for evidence-based and climate-responsive planning**. This includes supporting national and local actors improve the use of climate and risk information in decision-making, guiding public and private partners in expanding sustainable and ESG-aligned financing, helping agencies apply ecosystem-value approaches in policy and investment planning, promoting more sustainable production and consumption models, and improving institutional readiness for loss and damage governance so that these translate into concrete gains for low-carbon, circular and climate-resilient development.
- The government’s reported midterm accomplishment reflects the active engagement of LGUs in supporting the national agenda on circular economy through the establishment of support infrastructures and local policies. These initiatives **could be further supported by UNCT programming through gap assessments and providing technical support in M&E** to ensure the continuity and sustainability of these interventions.
- The development of the circular-economy taxonomy opens an opportunity for the United Nations to help **shape the emerging circular-economy investment ecosystem** by promoting blended-finance solutions for circular and low-carbon projects, building the capacity of regulators and financial institutions, and strengthen tracking and reporting systems aligned with climate and circular-economy goals. These could further support the country’s positioning in global conventions for circular economy.

- The emerging Low Carbon Economy Investment Bill creates an additional opportunity for the United Nations to **strengthen national readiness for a more regulated low-carbon transition**. Even at this stage of the legislative process, its progress is already shaping policy direction, investor expectations and sectoral planning across industry, energy, waste and transport. The UNCT can maximize its support by helping government and sectors develop decarbonization plans and prepare institutions and industries for future participation in carbon markets and climate-finance mechanisms.
- With the objective of undertaking a comprehensive NDC update and initiating the development of the country’s Long-Term Strategy, the delay in submitting the updated NDC during COP30 may result in missed opportunities for engagement and negotiation at the international level. However, the extended timeline also provides a domestic **opportunity to strengthen the analytical basis of the update by allowing for more robust calculations and enhanced contextualization**. This period can further support wider stakeholder engagement, including consultations with civil society, non-state actors, and the private sector, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and well-grounded NDC.
- Given the guidelines for the issuance and management of Carbon Credit Certificates (CCCs), UNCT interventions should focus on **enhancing national and local capacities to design, implement, and monitor eligible mitigation projects capable of generating CCCs**. This includes providing technical assistance on monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems, baseline setting, and verification processes to ensure environmental integrity and alignment with international standards. Programming should also facilitate multi-stakeholder coordination—engaging government agencies, private sector actors, financial institutions, and civil society—to accelerate readiness for carbon-pricing instruments and future market mechanisms, including a potential emissions trading system. Moreover, the UNCT should help strengthen policy coherence by linking the circular’s implementation with the country’s NDC commitments, sectoral decarbonization plans, and broader just transition objectives. Finally, UNCT approaches should promote inclusive access to carbon finance by supporting municipalities, SMEs, and vulnerable groups to participate in emerging carbon markets, ensuring that benefits contribute to sustainable development and equitable climate outcomes.
- The National GJ HRD Plan provides the UN with **clear signals on priority sectors—such as renewable energy, construction, agriculture, and manufacturing—for targeted interventions that support a just and inclusive green transition**. Its accompanying action points, developed through consultations with key agencies and institutions, offer a roadmap for aligning UN programming with national priorities while addressing capacity gaps and resource constraints. By using the plan as a baseline, the UN can design context-responsive programs that strengthen green skills development, enhance institutional capacities, and integrate social protection measures for workers in transition. This alignment ensures that UN approaches complement government-led initiatives, foster tripartite dialogue, and leverage partnerships to advance sustainable economic transformation in line with the country’s Green Jobs Act and broader climate commitments.
- United Nations support was key to the Philippines’ successfully joining the WTO TESSD, through the EU-funded Climate Competitiveness Project, which was flagged by government partners as critical in their internal advocacy and ability to further engage in discussions on the trade and environment nexus. UN support remains necessary in this context.

Output 3.3: Biodiversity, NRM, Agriculture

a) Major developments and changes in context

- The Philippines launched the **third iteration of the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) 2024–2040**, aligning national targets with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The updated PBSAP emphasizes ecosystem restoration, agrobiodiversity, and stronger partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- The country presented a **revised draft National Pathway for Agrifood Systems Transformation** at the UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) in July. The pathway outlines the key challenges confronting the national food system and proposes integrated action tracks designed to deliver systemic solutions.

b) Implications for UN

- The United Nations through its regular programs and projects and existing ties with the national government can **support PBSAP Implementation by** providing technical assistance and mobilize resources for ecosystem restoration, agrobiodiversity initiatives, and community-led conservation efforts. Facilitate partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities to ensure inclusive biodiversity governance.
- To accelerate NDC delivery, the UNCT should **strengthen institutional capacity** for sectoral planning and MRV, mobilize climate finance, and promote integrated mitigation-adaptation strategies across energy, transport, agriculture, and land-use sectors.
- The UNCT should **assist in operationalizing the National Pathway to advance agrifood systems transformation** through multi-stakeholder platforms, investment pipelines, and policy coherence. It should also promote nutrition-sensitive, climate-resilient, and inclusive food systems by leveraging United Nations technical expertise and global coalitions.

2024-2028 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework



OUTCOME 1

Human capital development, inclusion & resilience building

Output 1.1 Health



Output 1.2 Nutrition



Output 1.3 Education



Output 1.4 Social & child protection



Output 1.5 Housing & habitat



Output 1.6 Governance



Output 1.7 Peace



OUTCOME 2

Sustainable economic development, decent work & innovation

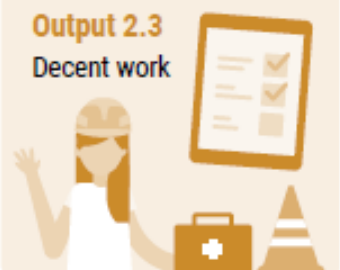
Output 2.1 Economic transformation



Output 2.2 Investment & financing



Output 2.3 Decent work



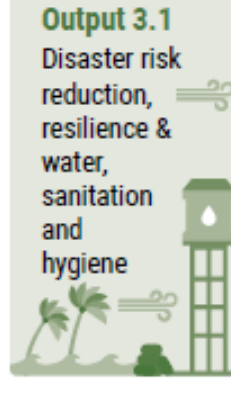
Output 2.4 Inclusive economy



OUTCOME 3

Climate action, environmental sustainability & disaster-resilience

Output 3.1 Disaster risk reduction, resilience & water, sanitation and hygiene



Output 3.2 Circular economy, low carbon development



Output 3.3

Biodiversity, natural resource management & agriculture

