

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Trends

The Philippine Government aims to eradicate subsistence poverty by 2030 and income poverty by 2040. It was able to achieve a decline in poverty rates from 23.3% in 2015 to 16.6% in 2018. However, with the pandemic, the latest Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data showed that the poverty incidence in the country increased by 2.6 percent points to 23.7 percent in the first semester of 2021 from the 21.1 percent in the first semester of 2018. This means that 26.24 million Filipinos are living below the poverty line at an average P12,082 threshold for a family of five. Also there are about 10.94 million Filipinos whose income is not enough to meet even the basic food needs

The Government is coming up with a catch-up plan because the pandemic resulted to a wipe out of at least two years gain in poverty reduction. The NEDA is aiming to achieve 13 to 15 percent poverty incidence in 2022 so that it can meet its target of zero poverty incidence.¹

The National Economic and Development Authority warned that the Philippines' poverty eradication goal -- both for subsistence and income poverty -- may be unachievable due to the pandemic's economic impact.² Economic gains were erased by the pandemic, with the poverty incidence among families ratcheting up to 18% in the first half of 2021. Government sought to ease the strain on families by expanding its cash transfer programs amounting to over P300 billion in various forms.

Meanwhile, the World Bank reported that the country will see little improvement in economic output because of the rising prices of commodities. This is due to increases of food and fuel prices in relation to the Ukraine-Russia war. The Washington-based World Bank downgraded

its 2022 GDP growth forecast for the country to 5.7 percent from the original target of 5.9 percent. It estimated that the poverty in the Philippines will decrease to 16.2 percent in 2022 from the original estimate of 18.3 percent.³

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

The impact of the pandemic is increasing the number of poor in the country. With current incomes remaining below pre-pandemic levels, low-income households have had difficulty coping with the steady increase in the prices of food and other basic commodities. With more families living below the poverty threshold of \$215 a month (2018 government estimate for a family of five), many households with diminished incomes are likely to become chronically poor.

Those with double/triple burden are the most vulnerable, including: women in informal economies, rural women, children & young people with disabilities, indigenous peoples children with disabilities; elderly who are homeless or living with disabilities, urban and rural poor, small scale farmers and fishers, and migrants or undocumented persons, including the Bangsamoro. There is failure in terms of reflecting the multidimensional form of poverty, such as those experienced by persons with disabilities and their families.

For cultural reasons, women bear the burdens of caring for family members and doing domestic work. They are also the ones who promptly look for other means to augment the meager family income and resort to loans that they can barely repay. They end up falling into a debt trap, borrowing money just to pay their outstanding loans.

Listahanan 2.0 data indicates that about 70 percent of persons with disabilities is not working.

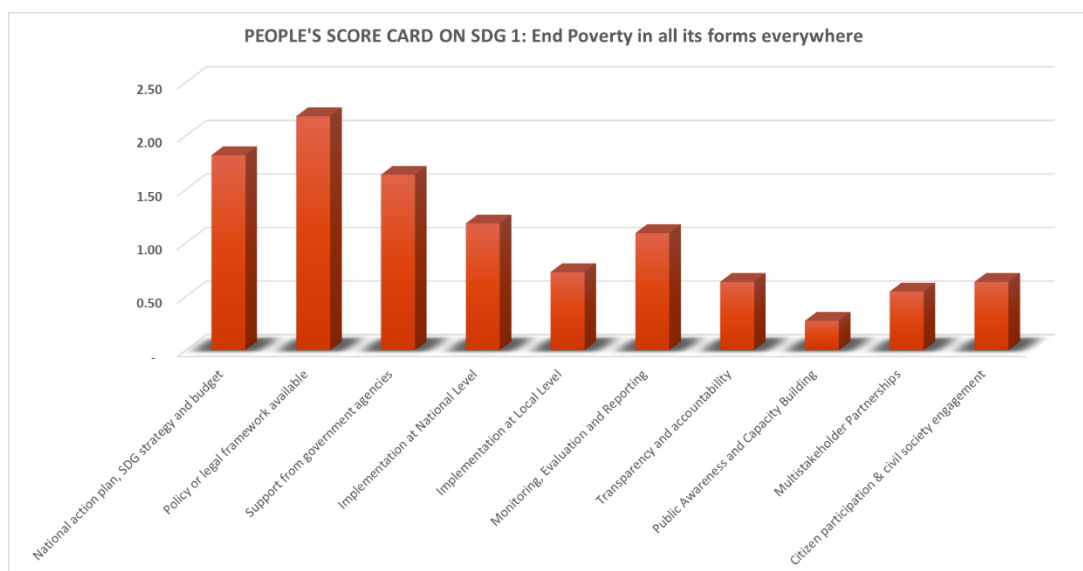
Solutions and policy recommendations

- In the near term, the priority should be on rehabilitating the economy by building the capacity of business enterprises and retooling and retraining the labor sector. After revitalizing the economy, the government should refocus its attention and continue its reforms to taxation and revenue administration to ensure that it has enough resources to sustain its development efforts. Emphasis should be given to progressive tax policies rather than regressive and less transparent indirect taxes, as inequality remains a major hindrance to achieving inclusive development and poverty alleviation. Donor countries and institutions should support these interventions to allow the Philippines to become once again an able partner in pursuing global prosperity.
- Strengthen/adopt a people-centered, human rights based development framework to address systemic issues and challenges not addressed with continuing implementation of decades-old market-driven and private profit-biased neo-liberal development framework hindering the eradication of poverty, discrimination, and inequality.
- For indigenous peoples, Muslims and other diverse groups, employ culturally appropriate development approaches in the provision of their needs.
- Re-orient social protection from its residual policy framework and link it to a broader developmental agenda that is transformative and which upholds universal social policy. In this light, promote the progressive version of the universal social protection floor and work closely with various citizens' movements in the country and abroad, government agencies, and the International Labor Organization (ILO);
- Significantly increase public investments in agriculture (which includes fishing and forestry) and focus on increasing the productivity and incomes of farmers and fisherfolk.
- Complete agrarian reform in Private Agricultural Lands (PAL) and significantly increase public investment in support services so that agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) can adequately earn from their newly-acquired land. This will also stem the widespread practice of ARBs re-selling their land due to lack of government support to make their lands productive.
- Stop the rampant practice of agricultural land conversion to industrial, commercial and residential estates. Instead, the government should come up with a National Land Use Plan that provides a premium to ensuring the country's food security/sovereignty and consider sustainable development principles in the use of the country's land and other resources.
- Decisively address the lop-sided character of Agricultural Venture Agreements (AVAs) where farmers are generally disadvantaged. To this end, government should tap an independent and competent research entity to assess DAR's AVA program and make the necessary recommendations with a view to ensuring that farmers equally benefit from any joint partnership with the private sector.
- The Philippine government and UNCTAD to champion the adoption of international social protection floors as a necessary remedial measure for mitigating the risks of employment displacement.
- Women workers' voices, participation and agency must be promoted and respected especially in crafting policies that impact on them; They must not be seen as mere recipients of government programs and services but as critical stakeholder in migration governance.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 1 had the highest mean score at 2.18, while initiatives on public awareness and capacity building ranked lowest with 0.27 mean.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.82
Policy or legal framework available	2.18
Support from government agencies	1.64
Implementation at National Level	1.18
Implementation at Local Level	0.73
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	1.09
Transparency and accountability	0.64
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.27
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.55
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.64

Policy

- The Department of Agriculture's food security concept is still anchored on food availability and mostly achieved through importation. It needs to give ample support to sustainable agriculture programs such as organic rice/food production.
- Traders have greater control of marketing and transport of farmers' produce.
- Government created jobs through its *Build Build Build* program, a major infrastructure project to construct/improve farm-to-market roads, seaports, airports, trains, bridges, etc., to tie together the country's supply chain system as well as improve access to existing and new tourism sites.
- *Build Build Build* plans have been centrally driven with insufficient citizens' monitoring mechanisms. However, the public has been invited to monitor projects through a geo-tagging system created by the public works department.
- Reports on the ground confirmed that farm-to-market roads doubled incomes by providing farmers direct access to markets and reducing insurgency at the same time. Prior to the pandemic, government reported a decline in the poverty rate from 23.5% in 2015 to 16.7% in 2018. Based on World Bank reports, the growth had become more inclusive⁴.
- Economic gains were erased by the pandemic, with the poverty incidence among families ratcheting up to 18% in the first half of 2021. Government sought to ease the strain on families by expanding its cash transfer programs amounting to over P300 billion in various forms. With this, there was less social unrest despite the extreme drop in GDP growth, - 9.6%, in 2020.
- Implementation of SDG 1-related programs by Local Government Units is almost nil.

Situationer

- ADB (2021) : poverty incidence to 20 percent this year from 16.7 percent in 2018 which means an equivalent of about 22 million poor Filipinos. In contrast, the number of poor Filipinos in 2018 was estimated at 17.7 million.⁵
- WB (2021): number of poor Filipinos increased by an estimated 5.23 million (from 17.67 million or 16.7% of the population in 2018, to 22.9 million or 21% of the population in 2020)⁶
- NEDA : Philippines could still bring down poverty incidence to its target of 14 percent by 2022 despite the pandemic (based on anticipated recovery)⁷
- The impact of the pandemic is increasing the number of poor in the country. With current incomes remaining below pre-pandemic levels, low-income households have had difficulty coping with the steady increase in the prices of food and other basic commodities. With more families living below the poverty threshold of \$215 a month (2018 government estimate for a family of five), many households with diminished incomes are likely to become chronically poor.⁸
- For cultural reasons, women bear the burdens of caring for family members and doing domestic work. They are also the ones who promptly look for other means to augment the meager family income and resort to loans that they can barely repay. They end up falling into a debt trap, borrowing money just to pay their outstanding loans.⁹
- Those with double/triple burden are the most vulnerable, including: women in informal economies, rural women, children & young people with disabilities, indigenous peoples

children with disabilities; elderly who are homeless or living with disabilities, urban and rural poor, small scale farmers and fishers, and migrants or undocumented persons, including the *Bangsamoro*. There is failure in terms of reflecting the multidimensional form of poverty, such as those experienced by persons with disabilities and their families.

- *Listahanan* 2.0 data indicates that about 70 percent of persons with disabilities is not working.
- COVID-19 lockdowns highlighted and aggravated a vicious cycle of poverty. It caused more poverty amongst the poorest and affected progress towards SDGs 2 and 3.
- Officials at the local level remain dependent on plans and projects directed or allocated to them by the national government.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- Government and CSOs are helping each other to address poverty by creating jobs and livelihood programs.
- CSOs and other stakeholders are anxious on how local governments will perform given the new dispensation created by the implementation of the Mandanas Ruling which gives local governments an increased share of national taxes and other imposts.



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Trends

- DOST RNA Survey (Nov-Dec. 2020) : 62.1% or six out of 10 households reported they experienced moderate to severe food insecurity, while food security is highest in households with children (7 out of 10), and those with pregnant family members (8 out of 10).¹⁰
- Social Weather Stations has estimated that hunger incidence has increased to 4.2 million households in May 2021 from 2.1 million households in December 2019.¹¹
- At the peak, one in four people in NCR were hungry (NEDA, 2021)¹²
- The national Social Weather Survey of June 23-26, 2021 found that 13.6% or an estimated 3.4 million families experienced involuntary hunger – hunger due to lack of food to eat – at least once in the past three months.¹³ That is at least 10.2 million children going hungry, equivalent to about 20% of the estimated 50 million children and adolescents, 0-19 years old, in 2021.
- The 2019 Expanded National Nutrition Survey of the DOST-FNRI reports that 28.8% of children under-5 are stunted, 19% are underweight, and 5.8% are wasting. This means a good number of children are entering kindergarten suffering from long-term undernutrition and its negative effect on cognitive development which in turn impacts learning and attention span in the classroom.¹⁴
- Despite the enactment of *The First 1,000 Days Law*, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding until 5.9 months has been a low of 35.9%. Moreover, three in 10 children were not introduced to complementary feeding at six months. Among those who

were, eight in 10 were not meeting the minimum dietary diversity with only one in 10 children receiving the appropriate minimum acceptable diet.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

COVID-19 pandemic has implications on nutrition, food security, and food systems. The rapid spread of the disease led to strict community quarantine measures and imposed lockdowns resulting in a significant economic slowdown affecting food supply chains. The Rapid Nutrition Assessment Survey (RNAS) conducted in 2020 provided a snapshot of the country's food security situation, coping mechanisms, and nutrition services availed during the COVID-19 pandemic [10].¹⁵

- 71.7% of the households said they purchased food through credit, 66.2% said they borrowed from relatives and/or neighbors, and 30.2% through barter, while 21.1% of adults said they limited food intake in favor of children
- 22.1% said they experienced food insecurity because they had no money, 21.6% due to limited public transportation, 19.55% said because they lost their job, 10.8% said due to limited access to food stores, and 5.1% are the elderly who do not have other members of the family to buy food.
- Majority received food assistance from their local government or the private sector. They were given food packs usually containing rice and cereals, canned and other dry goods, instant coffee, and milk and other dairy products.
- 6 in every 10 households experienced moderate to severe food insecurity.
- Food insecurity highest during April and May 2020 where Luzon was under the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ).
- food insecurity was highest in households with children (74.7%) and pregnant members (80.8%)

- Lack of Access to food was due to no money to buy food, no or limited transportation, no money due to lost jobs, limited food stores in the area, no other members to buy food for the elderly.
- While the government and private groups worked together to provide food assistance to affected households through "ayuda" food packs, the food items were insufficient to meet Filipinos' recommended energy and nutrient intakes
- The food packs included rice and cereals, canned goods (sardines, canned tuna, corned beef, meatloaf), instant coffee, and milk and other dairy products (milk, yogurt, and cheese).
- COVID-19 pandemic did not drastically affect breastfeeding practices, either exclusive or any form of breastfeeding (60.8% and 59.7%),
- However, 19.0% of children 0-23 months old stopped breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic due to mothers deciding not to breastfeed, mothers returning to work, the child not wanting to breastfeed, or the mother not being able to go home.
- Complementary feeding practices were not affected, with 93.3% of young children meeting the minimum meal frequency.
- Breastmilk substitutes (BMS) were included in the donations for families with babies less than two years old. Donations of milk formula during disasters, calamities, emergencies, and public health crises, including pandemics, are prohibited under Executive Order 51 or the Philippine Milk Code.
- Due to lockdowns and limited resources, programs such as Operation Timbang (OPT) Plus, supplementary feeding, micronutrient supplementation, and deworming were interrupted.
- The RNAS reported that 48.9% of children were not weighed nor measured for height.

- Non-participation in OPT Plus was due to the closure of health centers during the lockdown, the health and nutrition workers did not visit house-to-house, and that some households do not know that the program exists.
- Closure of schools resulted in delays in delivering nutrition-related services. UNICEF reported a 30 percent reduction of nutrition services in schools in low- and middle-income countries, especially those that imposed total lockdown like the Philippines
- The school-based feeding program of DepED was tweaked for blended, home-based learning. Instead of hot meals, schoolchildren are now given nutritious food products delivered to their households or picked up by parents in schools.
- The dietary supplementation program was also shortened to 60 days for the regular component and 50 days for the milk component.

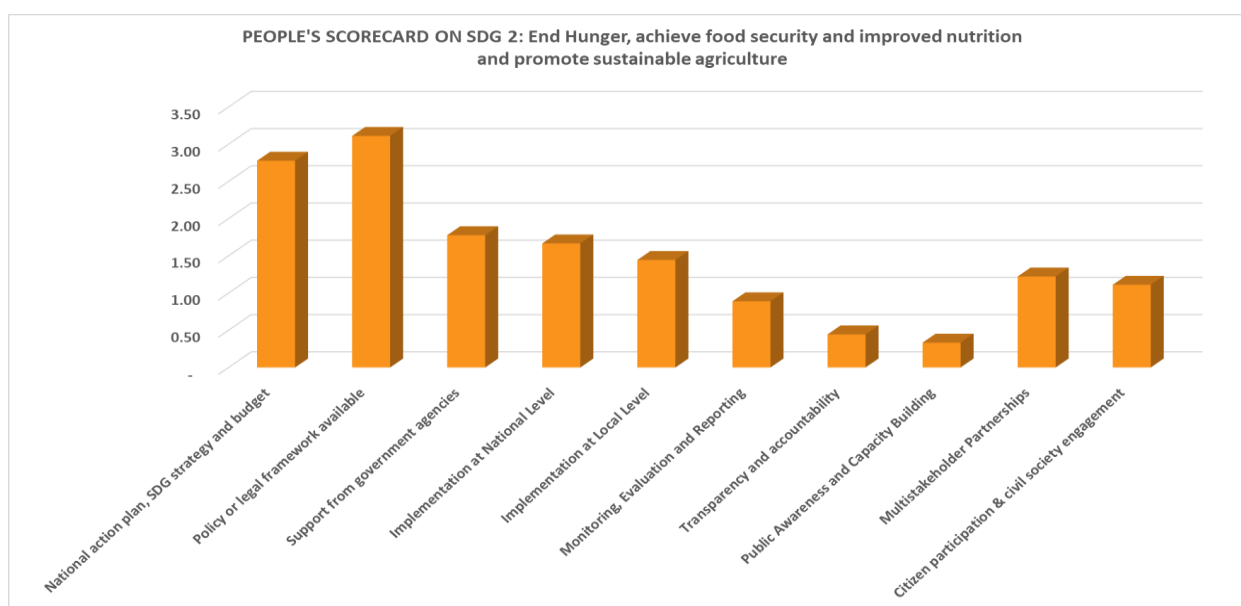
Solutions and policy recommendations

- The Department of Agriculture's food security concept is still anchored on food availability and mostly achieved through importation. It needs to give ample support to sustainable agriculture programs such as organic rice/food production.
- There is a need to raise the incomes and productivity of farmers and fisherfolk
- Budget advocates among CSOs have lobbied hard for the expansion of day care and in-school feeding programs for pre-school to Grade 3 students. There has been some success in the increase in the per capita budget for feeding programs and the provision of meals for all Kinder students.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 2 had the highest mean score at 3.11, while initiatives on public awareness and capacity building ranked lowest with a mean score of 0.33.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	2.78
Policy or legal framework available	3.11
Support from government agencies	1.78
Implementation at National Level	1.67
Implementation at Local Level	1.44
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.89
Transparency and accountability	0.44
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.33
Multistakeholder Partnerships	1.22
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	1.11

Policy

- The Government addressed the problem of hunger by creating an *Inter-Agency Task Force On Zero Hunger* in January 2020. Chaired by the Office of the Cabinet Secretary, it aims to ensure a “whole-of-government” approach to ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- A *National Food Policy* has been crafted and an anti-hunger initiative “*Pilipinas Kontra Gutom*” (PKG) was launched in 2020. The members of this multi-sectoral initiative are largely private companies, industry associations, and corporate foundations. It does not include peoples’ organizations or civil society organizations (CSOs). Transparency and accountability issues are similarly not high on the agenda.
- Government focus more on merely addressing the severity of wasting and stunting among school children than the overall well-being of children.
- At the local level, city and municipal governments emphasized the implementation of The *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)*.

Situationer

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- The 2019 Expanded National Nutrition Survey of the DOST-FNRI reports that 28.8% of children under-5 are stunted, 19% are underweight, and 5.8% are wasting. This means a good number of children are entering kindergarten suffering from long-term undernutrition and its negative effect on cognitive development which in turn impacts learning and attention span in the classroom.²⁰
- Despite the enactment of *The First 1,000 Days Law*, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding until 5.9 months has been a low of 35.9%. Moreover, three in 10 children were not introduced to complementary feeding at six months. Among those who were, eight in 10 were not meeting the minimum dietary diversity with only one in 10 children receiving the appropriate minimum acceptable diet.
- Food and relief packs do not meet / consider nutritional requirements for pregnant and lactating mothers as well as for infants and toddlers. No provision for milk and food supplements including vitamins.²¹
- Inadequate food, care, and nutrition of pregnant and lactating mothers, and their children impacts IMR in the country.
- The pandemic has caused hunger for those who lost their jobs. Food was not sufficient for many families.
- There is lack of food security and a dismal state of agriculture.

- There is a need to raise the incomes and productivity of farmers and fisherfolk
- **COVID-19 Impact**
 - COVID-19 pandemic has implications on nutrition, food security, and food systems. The rapid spread of the disease led to strict community quarantine measures and imposed lockdowns resulting in a significant economic slowdown affecting food supply chains. The Rapid Nutrition Assessment Survey (RNAS) conducted in 2020 provided a snapshot of the country's food security situation, coping mechanisms, and nutrition services availed during the COVID-19 pandemic [10].²²
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 - Majority received food assistance from their local government or the private sector. They were given food packs usually containing rice and cereals, canned and other dry goods, instant coffee, and milk and other dairy products.
 - 6 in every 10 households experienced moderate to severe food insecurity.
 - Food insecurity highest during April and May 2020 where Luzon was under the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ).
 - food insecurity was highest in households with children (74.7%) and pregnant members (80.8%)
 - Lack of Access to food was due to no money to buy food, no or limited transportation, no money due to lost jobs, limited food stores in the area, no other members to buy food for the elderly.
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- Due to lockdowns and limited resources, programs such as Operation Timbang (OPT) Plus, supplementary feeding, micronutrient supplementation, and deworming were interrupted.
- The RNAS reported that 48.9% of children were not weighed nor measured for height.
- Non-participation in OPT Plus was due to the closure of health centers during the lockdown, the health and nutrition workers did not visit house-to-house, and that some households do not know that the program exists.
- Closure of schools resulted in delays in delivering nutrition-related services. UNICEF reported a 30 percent reduction of nutrition services in schools in low- and middle-income countries, especially those that imposed total lockdown like the Philippines
- The school-based feeding program of DepED was tweaked for blended, home-based learning. Instead of hot meals, schoolchildren are now given nutritious food products delivered to their households or picked up by parents in schools.
- The dietary supplementation program was also shortened to 60 days for the regular component and 50 days for the milk component.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

Budget advocates among CSOs have lobbied hard for the expansion of day care and in-school feeding programs for pre-school to Grade 3 students. There has been some success in the increase in the per capita budget for feeding programs and the provision of meals for all Kinder students.



Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Trends

- **Disease Prevention and Control.** SDG 3.3 on fighting communicable diseases is noted to be regressing.²³; Incidence of mental health problems and suicides increased during the pandemic; The Philippines has the fastest-growing HIV epidemic in Asia and the Pacific With a 237% increase of new HIV infections from 2010 to 2020.
- **National Health Budget.** Compared with other sectors of the national budget, the health sector has a meager share, accounting for less than 2 percent of the country's GDP.²⁴ The 2021 national budget for health pales in comparison with spending on defense and infrastructure. The budget reflects a short-term response to the pandemic and ongoing privatization of the public health care system. According to news reports, the 2021 health department budget is \$400 million lower than its 2020 budget of \$3 billion.²⁵
- **Maternal and Child Health.** The maternal mortality rate in the country, while decreasing, remains high at 90 deaths per 100,000 live births. Infant mortality rate, (IMR) also increased from 12.6 per 1,000 live births in 2018 to 13.0 per 1,000 live births in 2019

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

COVID 19 exposed the weaknesses of the health system especially when the number of cases rose and people found it difficult to avail of hospital care not only for COVID treatment, but also for other morbidities. Confusing information on how the public should deal with COVID-19 caused widespread anxiety and helplessness. It was a struggle between saving lives and livelihoods.

Migration to digital platforms such as e-consultations and monitoring and reporting of cases was slow and inconsistent. There were reports of massive corruption at the national and local levels. Corruption in the procurement of medical equipment, treatments were documented but the culprits have not been meted with punishment. Amid the health crisis, when families can no longer make ends meet, economic challenges that hinder access to Sexual and Reproductive Health have worsened. Maternal health services were also greatly affected by imposed lockdowns. In fact, 15.5% of pregnant women were not able to have their prenatal check-ups. Some expressed their fear of going to a health facility or were not aware of their current pregnancy.²⁶

Out of pocket expenditure for health services also remain high.

The law that automatically and mandatorily enroll persons with disabilities in the Philippine Health Insurance was not implemented in the spirit of the law. There is conflict in the essence of the law and the implementing guidelines. Before the law, many persons with disabilities enjoy the subsidy program of their local government. Presently, most people with disabilities are not enrolled in the health insurance. Their requirement to only use the Philippine Registry of Persons with Disabilities as basis for budgeting is problematic. Many local government is complaining that the database is not always accessible. Not to mention, the lack of personnel or internet (on the side of local government) to fulfil this extra work. No budget was also allocated for the 2022 budget to fund those who are already in the database.

A study conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) revealed that 5.168 million, or 67 percent, of Filipino women of reproductive age 15 to 49 are unable to access family planning services. The study estimated that unintended pregnancies would reach 2.5 million by the end of 2020.²⁷ Although the Gender Gap Index study mentioned that Filipino

women can have good health longer than men, there is a strong possibility that women's health status will change with the spread of the virus, especially now that COVID-19 cases have surpassed 1 million.^{31, 28} Access to healthcare by pregnant women further deteriorated during the pandemic. The lack of access to health professionals and facilities limits mothers from enjoying healthy pregnancy and delivery.

Solutions and policy recommendations

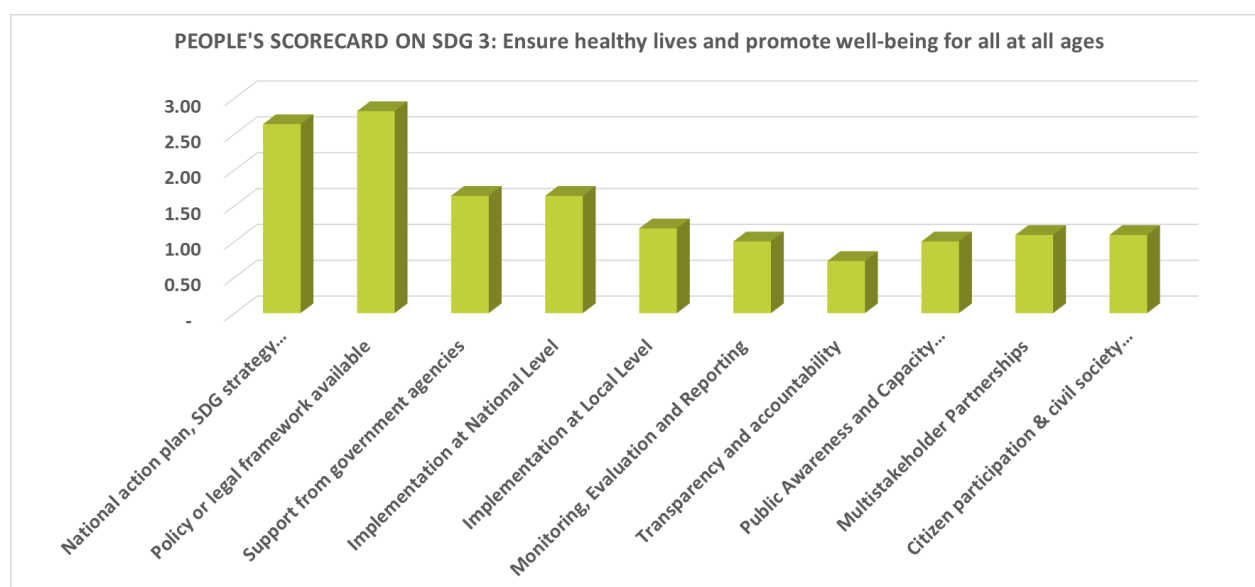
- The Government should develop and strengthen public health care system anchored on community-based approach to health care from the barangay to the town/city, district, province, regional and national levels.
- Give priority to delivery of health care services and medicine to the impoverished sick, aged, and disabled, women and children.
- Stop the privatization of public hospitals. Build, upgrade and rehabilitate primary, secondary, and tertiary hospitals and barangay health stations, especially those in far-flung areas, using public funds.
- Stop labor-export policy and brain-drain of health professionals by increasing their salaries and providing adequate protection including guarding their rights as humanitarian workers delivering health services to disadvantaged communities
 - Reverse the salary standardization law IV and wage rationalization law
 - Scrap the no-home birthing law policy
 - Repeal EO Nos. 102 and 365 on streamlining and rationalization plan

- Establish a clear health human resource development plan.
- Renationalize devolved health services. Rescind RA 7160 on the devolution of health services.
- Provide adequate health budget commensurate to the health needs of Filipinos. Allocate at least 5% of the country's GDP for health to the national budget. Funds should be allocated to public health services instead of being coursed through the Philhealth.
- Nationalize and build a pharmaceutical industry that will provide safe, accessible, affordable, essential and effective medicine for Filipinos. Regulate the operation of transnational pharmaceutical corporations – including price control and marketing. Remove the VAT on medicines.
- Stop and investigate all corrupt practices. Address systemic barriers to achieving free, comprehensive, and progressive health care founded on equity, social justice, and people's rights. Dismantle foreign dominance in the country's economy. Build national industry. Develop the countryside – address landlessness and food insecurity. Promote people's welfare – provide meaningful jobs, access to health and sanitation, education as well as housing.
- Fully implement the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) Act and the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Reproductive Health Law to "grant free care and services to indigents" (Section 7, RPRH Act) especially prioritizing access to SRH information and services such as family planning, contraceptives, maternal health care, among others for all Filipinos.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 3 had the highest mean score at 2.82, while transparency and accountability ranked lowest with a mean score of 0.73.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	2.64
Policy or legal framework available	2.82
Support from government agencies	1.64
Implementation at National Level	1.64
Implementation at Local Level	1.18
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	1.00
Transparency and accountability	0.73
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	1.00
Multistakeholder Partnerships	1.09
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	1.09

Policy

- **New Health Policies.** The Philippines passed a number of significant national laws related to health in the past six years such as the *Universal Health Care Law*, *Mental Health Law*, *Cancer Control Law*, and the *Sin Tax Law*. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of these laws were delayed or slowed down dramatically.
- **National Health Budget.** Compared with other sectors of the national budget, the health sector has a meager share, accounting for less than 2 percent of the country's GDP.²⁹ The 2021 national budget for health pales in comparison with spending on defense and infrastructure. The budget reflects a short-term response to the pandemic and ongoing privatization of the public health care system. According to news reports, the 2021 health department budget is \$400 million lower than its 2020 budget of \$3 billion.^{29 30}
- **Social Health Insurance.**
 - Out of pocket expenditure for health services also remain high.
 - The law that automatically and mandatorily enroll persons with disabilities in the Philippine Health Insurance was not implemented in the spirit of the law. There is conflict in the essence of the law and the implementing guidelines. Before the law, many persons with disabilities enjoy the subsidy program of their local government. Presently, most people with disabilities are not enrolled in the health insurance. Their requirement to only use the Philippine Registry of Persons with Disabilities as basis for budgeting is problematic. Many local government is complaining that the database is not always accessible. Not to mention, the lack of personnel or internet (on the side of local government) to fulfil this extra work. No budget was also allocated to fund those who are already in the database.

Situationer

- **Disease Prevention and Control**
 - None of the SDG 3 targets are on track. SDG 3.3 on fighting communicable diseases is noted to be regressing.³¹
 - Infant mortality rate, (IMR) also increased from 12.6 per 1,000 live births in 2018 to 13.0 per 1,000 live births in 2019.
 - Incidence of mental health problems and suicides increased during the pandemic.
 - The Philippines has the fastest-growing HIV epidemic in Asia and the Pacific With a 237% increase of new HIV infections from 2010 to 2020. Misinformation about HIV/AIDS, as well as stigma and discrimination, are the barriers to HIV testing, access to health care and protection. Discriminatory norms, practices and misconceptions such as “condoms do not sexually satisfy men continue to hinder the use of contraceptives like condoms, which can help prevent HIV transmission.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic**
 - COVID 19 exposed the weaknesses of the health system especially when the number of cases rose and people found it difficult to avail of hospital care not only for COVID treatment, but also for other morbidities.
 - Confusing information on how the public should deal with COVID-19 caused widespread anxiety and helplessness.
 - It was a struggle between saving lives and livelihoods.
 - Migration to digital platforms such a e-consultations and monitoring and reporting of cases was slow and inconsistent.

- There were reports of massive corruption at the national and local levels. Corruption in the procurement of medical equipment, treatments were documented but the culprits have not been meted with punishment.
- Amid the health crisis, when families can no longer make ends meet, economic challenges that hinder access to Sexual and Reproductive Health have worsened.
- Maternal health services were also greatly affected by imposed lockdowns. In fact, 15.5% of pregnant women were not able to have their prenatal check-ups. Some expressed their fear of going to a health facility or were not aware of their current pregnancy.³²
- **Women's Health**
 - A study conducted by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) revealed that 5.168 million, or 67 percent, of Filipino women of reproductive age 15 to 49 are unable to access family planning services. The study estimated that unintended pregnancies would reach 2.5 million by the end of 2020.³³
 - Although the Gender Gap Index study mentioned that Filipino women can have good health longer than men, there is a strong possibility that women's health status will change with the spread of the virus, especially now that COVID-19 cases have surpassed 1 million.³⁴
 - Access to healthcare by pregnant women further deteriorated during the pandemic.
 - The maternal mortality rate in the country, while decreasing, remains high at 90 deaths per 100,000 live births. The lack of access to health professionals and facilities limits mothers from enjoying healthy pregnancy and delivery.
- **Health Facilities.** Privatization of state hospitals and facilities has already reduced the limited number of public hospitals, from 730 in 2010 to 433 in 2018. With fewer state hospitals, which now also have to focus on attending to COVID-19 patients, other health concerns.³⁵

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- **People's Participation Mechanisms**
 - Government is not welcoming opportunities for partnerships to address the pandemic (civil society, private sector, and other government agencies willing to help in the COVID19 response were discriminated against). Government selected civil society who they want to consult with in relation to COVID response and recovery, including for SDGs.
 - Discouraged volunteerism by vilifying and red tagging CSOs and civil society initiatives such as community kitchens and community pantries
 - The Government gave bigger role for business and private sector, easing out CSOs working with the marginalized
- **CSO Key Asks:**
 - Provide free, comprehensive and progressive health care services for all Filipinos.
 - The Government should develop and strengthen public health care system anchored on community-based approach to health care from the barangay to the town/city, district, province, regional and national levels.
 - Give priority to delivery of health care services and medicine to the impoverished sick, aged, and disabled, women and children.

- Build, upgrade and rehabilitate primary, secondary, and tertiary hospitals and barangay health stations, especially those in far-flung areas, using public funds.
- Public health care should focus on disease prevention, mass health education, nutrition, sanitation and immunization.
- Stop the privatization of other anti-people, anti-health worker policies.
 - Reverse the privatization of public hospitals
 - Stop large-scale mining and use of coal for energy
 - Stop labor-export policy and brain-drain of health professionals by increasing their salaries and providing adequate protection including guarding their rights as humanitarian workers delivering health services to disadvantaged communities
 - Reverse the salary standardization law IV and wage rationalization law
 - Scrap the no-home birthing law policy
 - Repeal EO Nos. 102 and 365 on streamlining and rationalization plan
- Renationalize devolved health services. Rescind RA 7160 on the devolution of health services.
- Provide adequate health budget commensurate to the health needs of Filipinos. Allocate at least 5% of the country's GDP for health to the national budget. Funds should be allocated to public health services instead of being coursed through the Philhealth.
- Establish a clear health human resource development plan.
- Nationalize and build a pharmaceutical industry that will provide safe, accessible, affordable, essential and effective medicine for Filipinos.
 - Regulate the operation of transnational pharmaceutical corporations – including price control and marketing.
 - Conduct independent health research projects beneficial to Filipinos
 - Remove the VAT on medicines
- Stop and investigate all corrupt practices.
- Address systemic barriers to achieving free, comprehensive, and progressive health care founded on equity, social justice, and people's rights.
 - Dismantle foreign dominance in the country's economy. Build national industry.
 - Develop the countryside – address landlessness and food insecurity
 - Promote people's welfare – provide meaningful jobs, access to health and sanitation, education as well as housing.
- Fully implement the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health (RPRH) Act and the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Reproductive Health Law to “grant free care and services to indigents” (Section 7, RPRH Act) especially prioritizing access to SRH information and services such as family planning, contraceptives, maternal health care, among others for all Filipinos.
- There is a need to challenge the corporations to shift to non-plastic container alternatives to PET for water, soda and other beverages, and regulate its use, to prevent further widespread plastics pollution. For example, the government should invest in free, publicly-available potable water systems to reduce consumption of plastic water bottles, and contribute to the health and well-being of the people.



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Trends

- The Department of Education (DepEd) faced implementation issues with the shift to online classes and later in the return to face-face and hybrid classes.
- Some students stopped studying due to difficulty in adjusting to online learning.
- Narrow curriculum content, low morale and motivation among the teachers, excessive workload, and poor professional development are factors that impact on teaching and quality of education. The massive disruption in the educational system across levels during the pandemic has brought home the challenge of providing instruction in alternative ways, underscoring the need for non-traditional modes and platforms of teaching and learning
- There was decline in educational quality as seen in various assessment tests (e.g. In NAT—math, science and languages, grade 6 students got 40% average while grade 10 students got 44%). There is also very low passing rate of teachers in the LET (ranges from 22 -29%)
- About 52 % of public schools have no internet connections. About 18% of public schools are in areas with internet service providers but have not yet connected. About 87 % of teachers have access to computers; 49% with internet access at home, 41% no internet access, 10% no signal in their area
- There was significant decrease in private sector enrollees with only 34.1% returning to private schools. DepEd recorded nearly 400,000 students migrating from the private to the public sector.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- Access to education among the poor and other disadvantaged groups, particularly secondary education, remains to be a critical issue. Poverty remains a major factor for dropping out of school.
- Unemployment of parents because of the pandemic restrictions is a big challenge. Many students stopped studying during the pandemic in order to help their parents for food and other basic needs.
- There is no national law on Inclusive Education that will ensure the operationalization of “inclusive, equitable and quality education for all.
- There is little wiggle room in the national budget for spending on other than personnel services and maintenance and operations. There is underinvestment in creating and providing appropriate learning materials for learners with disabilities, indigenous people, and Muslim.
- The digital divide exacerbate existing inequalities. Teachers would have to be trained in the use of technology for learning delivery. Early grade levels need to be closely supervised by parents in the use of technology. Orienting the parents and their capacity to take on the role are major challenges.
- The *Listahanan* 2.0 data indicates that 2 out of 3 poor children with disabilities is not in school.
- There is low enrolment in ALS among the out-of-school children and youth, with only 43.3% expected to return when the program resumes in October 2020.
- Muslim and IP learners have little access to schools. The lack of culturally-sensitive curricula and learning materials and the shortage of capable teachers remain serious challenges that impede Muslim and IP learners from claiming their right to education. Attacks by state-forces on *Lumad* schools have increased even amid the pandemic. Lumad schools have been forcibly closed or burned / destroyed by state forces.

- The country is now faced with the problem of early pregnancies which has increased the number of girls dropping out of school.

Solutions and policy recommendations

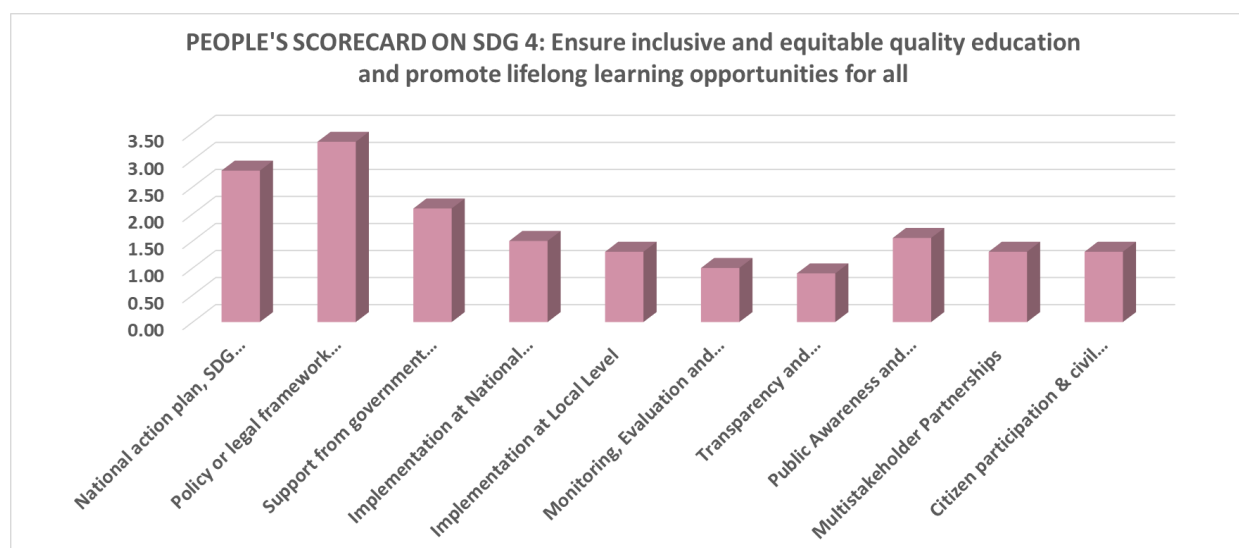
- Cascade DepEd's *Basic Education Development Plan 2030* to the school divisions and districts and to the individual schools. This shall serve as DepEd's blueprint for formulating, implementing and monitoring rights-based plans and programs for formal and non-formal basic education for the next decade. Review K to 12, for amendment or repeal.
- Strengthen education for civic consciousness and global citizenship especially in the context of learning through digital technologies. Invest in remote learning that helps mitigate the immediate disruption caused by COVID-19 and establish approaches to develop more open, flexible, inclusive and equitable education systems for the future.
- Ensure safe transition to face-to-face learning; greater focus on inclusion. Knowledge gaps as a result of the pandemic should be addressed. Proactively seek out-of-school and COVID 19-affected learners and provide budget for their education through ALS. Include of Social-Emotional and Character Development Programs in K-12 especially as learners return to face-to-face sessions, and establish support programs for teachers and all educators in transitioning to face-to-face learning
- Substantially increase the national education budgets. Provide highest budget priority to public education.
- The Implementing Rules and Regulations of *Republic Act 11713* to strengthen teacher education in the country should be finalized.
- Use a pro-poor approach and link education and training for decent work at the local level to relevant job opportunities in the country
- Child hunger should also be recognized as an education issue.
- Mandate pre-Kindergarten education. Provide pre-Kindergarten education in well-functioning day care centers in all barangays to ensure equal access to early childhood development programs. Teachers in day-care centers trained in early childhood education
- Ensure non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, respect for the right to education, in schools. Provide additional resources and develop and strengthen programs and pathways to learning opportunities for marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable (MEV) groups.
- Strongly encourage child participation in schools and strengthen school child protection for a positive and safe learning environment
- Ensure the provision of and access to age-appropriate information, education and adolescent-friendly comprehensive, quality and timely sexual and reproductive health services at both government and non-government led health facilities for adolescents and youth, including those with disabilities.
- Expedite the passage of the ALS and Inclusion for Learners with Disabilities bill. Pilot the establishment of Resource Centers for Learners with Disabilities and strengthen support (instructional materials, assistive devices, essential equipment)
- Establish community learning centers in the 100 identified IP communities without access to government schools. Respect and support Lumad schools as centers for education, cultural heritage and self-determined development. Stop attacks on schools especially Lumad and other IP schools. Reverse / revoke Department of Education's order to close Lumad community schools. Increase support for poor, conflict-affected Muslim children as per Dep. Order No. 55.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 4 had the highest mean score at 3.00, while transparency and accountability ranked lowest with a mean score of 0.67.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	2.80
Policy or legal framework available	3.33
Support from government agencies	2.10
Implementation at National Level	1.50
Implementation at Local Level	1.30
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	1.00
Transparency and accountability	0.90
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	1.56
Multistakeholder Partnerships	1.30
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	1.30

Policy

- The Department of Education (DepEd) implemented COVID-19 adaptive programming.
- DepEd launched its *Basic Education Development Plan 2030* to serve as its blueprint for formulating, implementing and monitoring plans and programs for formal and non-formal basic education for the next decade. The plan has adopted a rights-based education framework meant to bring the rights of the child to and in education at the center of policy-making and of programs, projects and activities. Much work, however, is needed to cascade this framework down to the school divisions and districts and to the individual schools.
- The Philippines has also enacted *Republic Act 11713* to strengthen teacher education in the country. Its implementing rules and regulations is yet to be finalized.
- There is no national law on Inclusive Education that will ensure the operationalization of “inclusive, equitable and quality education for all
- While the budget for basic to higher education and vocational training continued to get the highest allocation in the national budget, there is little wiggle room in the budget for spending on other than personnel services and maintenance and operations. Despite strong appeals made by CSOs, there is underinvestment in creating and putting in the hands of children the appropriate learning materials for learners with disabilities, indigenous and Muslim children.
- Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) consolidates data through the *SDG Watch*. The latest submission was supposedly April 2022.
- *Child Friendly Local Government Audit (CFLGA)* became a platform to monitor performance of LGUs (but has been highly politicized).

Situationer

- **Education in the context of COVID-19:**
 - DepEd experienced implementation issues especially in the shift to online classes and later in the return to face-face and hybrid classes. The quality of learning amongst cohorts in the pandemic times is yet to be seen.
 - The biggest challenge for education would be in the fight against disinformation and fake news, and how this will be taught to the younger generation.
 - The importance of public awareness in education remained in the community even during the pandemic, but it might still not enough due to the lack of face-to-face meetings.
 - Unemployment of parents because of the pandemic restrictions became a big challenge. Many students stopped studying during the pandemic in order to help their parents with their daily needs, especially with basic needs such as food.
 - Some students stopped studying due to difficulty in adjusting to online learning. Others lacked funds to buy prepaid load and data packages for internet connection and the lack of available gadgets.
 - Capacity development among young people was reduced during the pandemic due to limited community engagement. There is online workshop-training, but not everyone

can participate in the training provided. Hence, few young people benefited from the training opportunities.

- **Political climate**

- With the political situation shifting to a new presidency, there is a need to strengthen education for civic consciousness and global citizenship especially in the context of learning through digital technologies.
- There is slow implementation of national plans to cover national scope of implementation. A consolidated update report from DepEd is yet to be disseminated.

- **Educators**

- The narrow curriculum content that is weak on critical thinking, social awareness, and sustainable development concepts may have contributed to the students' low mastery of subjects.
- The low morale and motivation among the teachers, excessive workload, and poor professional development are factors that impact on teaching and quality of education.
- The massive disruption in the educational system across levels during the pandemic has brought home the challenge of providing instruction in alternative ways, underscoring the need for non-traditional modes and platforms of teaching and learning
- The declining educational quality as seen in various assessment tests (e.g. In NAT—math, science and languages, grade 6 students got 40% average while grade 10 students got 44%)
- Low quality of teaching- Very low passing rate of teachers in the LET (ranges from 22-29%)

- **Access to technology**

- The digital divide will exacerbate existing inequalities
- About 52 % of public schools have no internet connections
- 18% of public schools are in areas with internet service providers but have not yet connected
- About 87 % of teachers have access to computers; 49% with internet access at home, 41% no internet access, 10% no signal in their area
- Teachers would have to be trained in the use of technology for learning delivery
- Early grade levels need to be closely supervised by parents in the use of technology. Orienting the parents will be a major challenge, and there are questions as to whether parents are ready to take on this role.

- **Children in vulnerable situations**

- Child hunger should also be recognized as an education issue. Malnutrition among very young children leads to stunting and brain underdevelopment. This puts then on a track that brings into question equity in education.
- The *Listahanan* 2.0 data indicates that 2 out of 3 poor children with disabilities is not in school.
- Access to education among the poor and other disadvantaged groups, particularly secondary education, remains to be a critical issue. Poverty remains a major factor for dropping out of school.

- Children with disabilities face great difficulties in accessing education.
- Low enrolment in ALS among the out-of-school children and youth, with only 43.3% expected to return when the program resumes in October 2020.
- Similarly, Muslim and IP learners have little access to schools. The lack of culturally-sensitive curricula and learning materials and the shortage of capable teachers remain serious challenges that impede Muslim and IP learners from claiming their right to education. Attacks by state-forces on *Lumad* schools have increased even amid the pandemic. Lumad schools have been forcibly closed or burned / destroyed by state forces.
- The country is now faced with the problem of early pregnancies which has increased the number of girls dropping out of school.
- **Private Sector**
 - Significant decrease in private sector enrollees with only 34.1% returning to private schools. DepEd has recorded nearly 400,000 students migrating from the private to the public sector

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- **CSO-National Government Partnerships**
 - The Government launched the *Ambisyon 2040* plans in 2016; however, there had been no updates received by CSOs on the status of the implementation of the plans in 2019-2022.
 - *World Vision* and *Educo* partners with DepEd on *Brigada Pagbasa* Project. The DepEd officially appointed World Vision as the lead co-convenor of Brigada Pagbasa, a project that intends to bring together educators, policymakers, and stakeholders across sectors to equip Filipino learners with improved functional literacy skills.
 - *World Vision* strives to improve learning outcomes in the Philippines by working closely with children, schools, and private and government partners. Its partnership with the DepEd, specifically on the implementation of the *Abutin Na10* fundraising campaign, and the Brigada Pagbasa literacy program, ensured that children would have access to learning materials and activity sheets even during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - *Stairway's* collaboration with Department of Education is on mainstreaming the Cyber safety program into the education curriculum.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management**
 - *Plan International's Safe Schools Project* focus on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) where students are being trained to create their own groups.
- **Local Level Engagement**
 - NGOs are very supportive in engaging local schools in providing information, i.e., in strengthening child protection, strengthening school development plans and DRRM plan together with LGUs. Regional councils are very active when it comes to monitoring and implementation at the sub-national levels.

- *ERDA Foundation*, a member of CRC Coalition, continuously promotes the importance of education in the community, even through online platforms. Despite encountering difficulties in the availability of gadgets, prepaid load, and stability of internet connection, capacity development was still conducted even with the limited opportunity (i.e., no face to face interaction).
 - *Educo* implements a project with DepEd and UNICEF in Samar, Southern Leyte, and CARAGA with a component on back to school advocacy with children. This includes development of IEC materials.
 - Recent efforts to institutionalize and to involve communities in CFLGA are now mandatory. CFLGA ensures that CSOs are represented in the validating team. *Educo* is part of the validating team in Bicol.
 - Partnerships of schools, LGUs, and CSOs in the formulation and implementation of child protection policy including case management.
 - *VIDES* is a member and auditor of the city council for the protection of children in a city in Cavite province.
 - Localization of humanitarian efforts especially in education are conducted with multiple partners, i.e., UN OCHA, CSOs, and DepEd Regional.
 - *ERDA Foundation* works to assist the learning situation in families and communities to cope up through continuously collaborating with generous individuals and groups in providing tutorial services, gadget, and load provision.
- **Child protection**
 - There are conflicts arising from BCPC, schools, and CSOs working on child protection mechanisms.
 - *Consuelo Foundation* implemented a project with *CREDe* on the integration of rights based education in the basic education curriculum.
 - *VIDES* has partnership with DepEd and public schools on school-based program on advocacy of CRC.
- **CSO Key Asks**
 - Inclusion of Social-Emotional and Character Development Programs in K-12 especially as learners return to face-to-face sessions after 2 years
 - Safe transition to face-to-face learning; greater focus on inclusion
 - Installation of support programs for teachers and all educators in transitioning to face-to-face learning
 - Address knowledge gaps brought about by learning during the pandemic
 - Mandate pre-Kindergarten education
 - Provide pre-Kindergarten education in well-functioning day care centers in all barangays to ensure equal access to early childhood development programs
 - Establish well-functioning day care centers with teachers trained in early childhood education
 - Substantially increase the national education budgets. Provide highest budget priority to public education.
 - Use a pro-poor approach and link education and training for decent work at the local level to relevant job opportunities in the country

- Ensure non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, respect for the right to education, in schools.
- Develop and strengthen programs and pathways to learning opportunities for marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable (MEV) groups
- Strongly encourage child participation in schools and strengthen school child protection for a positive and safe learning environment
- Ensure the quality of pre-service teacher education and availability of teacher training programs.
- Stop attacks on schools especially Lumad and other IP schools. Reverse / revoke Department of Education's order to close Lumad community schools.
- Review K to 12, for amendment or repeal
- Ensure the provision of and access to age-appropriate information, education and adolescent-friendly comprehensive, quality and timely sexual and reproductive health services at both government and non-government led health facilities for adolescents and youth, including those with disabilities.
- Strengthen the CSE programme and its delivery, for both in-school and out-of-school youth and adolescents, bringing it into line with international guidelines and best practices, especially regarding sexuality education.
- Invest in remote learning that helps mitigate the immediate disruption caused by COVID-19 and establish approaches to develop more open, flexible, inclusive and equitable education systems for the future.
- Provide additional programs and resources to improve the quality and access of the marginalized, excluded and vulnerable sectors to education
- Expedite the passage of the ALS and Inclusion for Learners with Disabilities bill
- Proactively seek out-of-school and COVID 19-affected learners and provide budget for their education through ALS (P5B)
- Establish community learning centers in the 100 identified IP communities without access to government schools (P35M)
- Increase support for poor, conflict-affected Muslim children (Dep. Order No.55) (P115M)
- Pilot the establishment of Resource Centers for Learners with Disabilities and strengthen support (instructional materials, assistive devices, essential equipment) (P90M)
- Conduct a GAD analysis of DepEd plans, budget and implementation (P3M)
- For more on this, see E-Net's ABI proposal (Education cluster of SWP)
- Respect and support Lumad schools as centers for education, cultural heritage and self-determined development.



Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Trends

- According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020, the Philippines is ranked 1st in Asia and 16th in the world in terms of closing the gender gap. The Philippines was once a consistent member of the top 10 in the Gender Gap Index, but has fallen eight spots to rank 17th. According to the survey, the country is improving in three of the four dimensions of the index: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and health and survival. In contrast, the country has widened the gap in political empowerment for the past two years. The study attributed this result to lower female representation in government positions.³⁶ The Philippines is ranked 17th out of 156 countries in closing the gender gap largely due to the presence of the Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Ombud of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR)-Center for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights working in partnership with Child Rights Center, which ensure gender equality and protect rights of children.
- The Commission on Population and Development projected that by the end 2021, about 160 thousand adolescent minors will have become or would continue to be heads of families.³⁷
- There has been a sustained threat to children with regards to gender-based violence including sexual exploitation. According to Disrupting Harm household survey data, in the past year alone, 20% of internet-using children aged 12-17 in the Philippines were victims of grave instances of online sexual exploitation and abuse.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- Women face challenges in getting access to health care. The privatization of hospitals and health care makes it more difficult for women to access high-quality health services. Health and mobility restrictions during the pandemic paused all activities intended to promote measures to address teenage pregnancies. The country is now faced with the problem of early pregnancies which has increased the number of girls dropping out of school.
- GAD projects remained susceptible to changes in administration; the inadequacy of funds dedicated to GAD activities; the uncertain impacts of small loans on poor women; and the uncertainty over whether the benefits are reaching the poorest women in the poorest regions.³⁸
- In the use of GAD funds at the local level, there are cases wherein the budgets for Civil Society, Persons with Disabilities, and Barangay Council for the Protection of Children are also lumped in the 5% GAD budget. There are also differences in the implementation of the allocation for GAD due to the practice of lumping of funds.
- In spite of a sustained threat of gender-based violence, there is low awareness of the public including children and young people of the different forms of violence and how to prevent it. There is also a low awareness among child-victims and at-risk on where to report or who to talk to. Children would also tend to disclose to friends and peers.

Solutions and policy recommendations

- Existing national plans should be anchored to international commitments in closing the gender gap.

- Full and strict implementation of Magna Carta of Women is still needed. A review of the GAD Budget Policy in 2010 revealed low compliance and poor-quality plans and reporting systems on implementation of Magna Carta of Women on the part of agencies.³⁹
- Strengthen capacity building support provided by the Department of Interior and Local Government to fully implement national policies and laws at the local level, especially on capacity building/development for service providers (healthcare, teachers/educators, police officers/law enforcement agents) catering to key populations such for trans persons having difficulty accessing services.
- Strengthen monitoring of the utilization of the GAD budget as part of the seal of good local governance. Monitoring is sometimes only done out of compliance.
- There are established systems to implement and monitor gender equality agenda and empowerment of women and girls, e.g. the Women and Children Protection Desks, Gender and Development Office. However, there is still a need to provide evidence on how the impact of these systems really benefit women and children particularly in eliminating all forms of sexual exploitation.

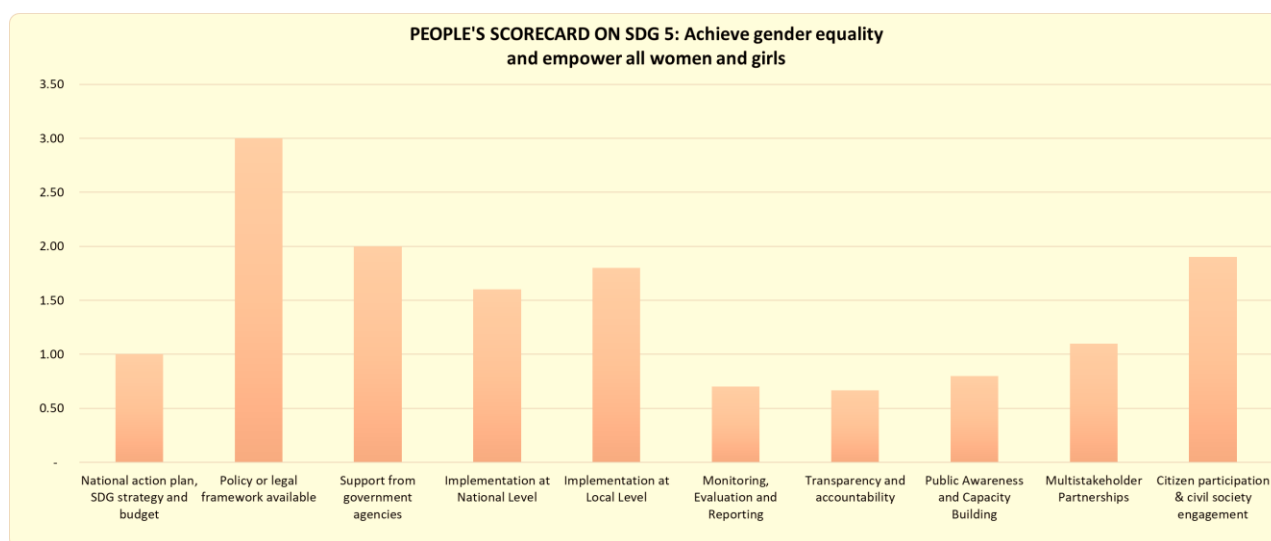
There is also a need to assess the functionality of these mechanisms especially at the Barangay LGU level. In some instances, these mechanisms are just in paper and for compliance only to name a few are areas in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Manjuyod.

- Conduct consultation among young people themselves on why teenage pregnancies is rising and what can be done.
- There is a need for public awareness on the boy-victims of different forms of sexual exploitation since the number of boy-victims has been significantly increasing. Conduct further study on the depth and magnitude of sexual exploitation of boys in the Philippines. Publicize and popularize the existing studies on different forms of gender-based violence for public awareness and capacity building.
- The latest Philippine Report to CEDAW talks of initiatives to harmonize data on women from various agencies, but the report does not reflect disaggregation based on ethnicity. Data disaggregation is important in determining the extent of 'not-being-left-behind'. Institutionalize data disaggregation based on ethnicity to determine extent of inclusion or exclusion and to inform planning and targeting.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

SDG 5 scored highest in terms of the “availability of policy and legal framework” and “national action plan, SDG strategy and budget” with mean scores of 3.00. Meanwhile, e transparency and accountability ranked lowest with a mean score of 0.67.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	3.00
Support from government agencies	2.00
Implementation at National Level	1.60
Implementation at Local Level	1.80
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	.70
Transparency and accountability	0.67
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.80
Multistakeholder Partnerships	1.10
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	1.90

Policy

- The country has produced more than 37 laws and executive and administrative orders on the protection and development of women.⁴⁰
- The 1992 Women in Development and Nation Building Act (Republic Act No. 7192), which mandated equal rights and opportunities for women and men, institutionalized gender mainstreaming in Philippine development planning. The law assigned the NEDA and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW)—now known as the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)—responsibility for monitoring the gender-mainstreaming efforts of government departments.⁴¹
- The country, since 1989, has been issuing gender-mainstreaming strategy which involved the implementation of gender-focused plans. The latest strategy document is the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Plan (GEWE 2019–2025). These framework plans were translations of the state’s commitment to international agreements, such as the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action Financing for Development in the Philippines 17 (BPfA). The NCRFW/PCW facilitated the formulation of the GAD plans, which reflect the gender-responsive provisions of the Philippine Development Plan at the time of their formulation. The GEWE Plan 2019-2025 covers four years of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, and the remaining years of the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGD) 1995-2025⁴²
- The 1995 General Appropriations Act (GAA), the first to include what is now known as the GAD Budget Policy, was a pioneering piece of legislation on gender-responsive budgeting in the Asia-Pacific region.⁴³ The GAD Budget Policy requires government agencies and subnational governments to set aside at least five percent of annual budget appropriations for GAD activities. The Commission on Audit (COA) monitors if the budget is properly utilized.⁴⁴
- Republic Act No. 9710 (RA 9710), also known as the Magna Carta of Women, was signed into law by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on August 14, 2009. This law called for the stronger enforcement of women’s rights and the promotion of equal opportunities for women.⁴⁵
- Despite a *Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act* enacted in 2012, there is still a need to scale up programs to promote adolescent reproductive health and development.⁴⁶
- Philippine President Rodrigo Roa Duterte signed *Executive Order No. 141 s. 2021* adopting as a national priority measures to address the root causes of the rising number of teenage pregnancies. The following laws were also enacted during his term: *the Anti-Child Marriage Law*, the law increasing the age of statutory rape, and the *Safe Spaces Act*.⁴⁷
- The Senate and the House of Representatives separately ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill No. 2209 and House Bill No. 10703 or the proposed *Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC)* and *Anti Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act*, respectively.⁴⁸
- Committees in the Senate and Congress (Senate Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality and House of Representative Women and Gender Equality) work to ensure implementation of policies at the national level.⁴⁹

- There is a localized presence of the Philippine Commission of Women (PCW) and Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), and an identified GAD focal point system in all government agencies and GOOCs based on the *Magna Carta of Women* (RA 9710). However, gender mainstreaming should be strengthened in CWC; there is a need to have a subcommittee that will focus on the gender-based needs of children.
- Not all municipalities and cities have Local Committees on Anti-Trafficking and Violence Against Women and Children (LCAT-VAWC).
- There are established systems to implement and monitor gender equality agenda and empowerment of women and girls, e.g. the Women and Children Protection Desks, Gender and Development Office. However, there is still a need to provide evidence on how the impact of these systems really benefit women and children particularly in eliminating all forms of sexual exploitation. There is also a need to assess the functionality of these mechanisms especially at the Barangay LGU level. In some instances, these mechanisms are just in paper and for compliance only to name a few are areas in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Manjuyod.

Situationer

- **Gender Gap**
 - According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2020, the Philippines is ranked 1st in Asia and 16th in the world in terms of closing the gender gap.
 - However, in the latest global poll, the Philippines—once a consistent member of the top 10 in the Gender Gap Index — has fallen eight spots to rank 17th. According to the survey, the country is improving in three of the four dimensions of the index: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and health and survival. In contrast, the country has widened the gap in political empowerment for the past two years. The study attributed this result to lower female representation in government positions.⁵⁰
 - The Philippines is ranked 17th out of 156 countries in closing the gender gap largely due to the presence of the Philippine Commission on Women, Gender Ombud of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR)-Center for Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights working in partnership with Child Rights Center, which ensure gender equality and protect rights of children.
- **Gender rights**
 - Full and strict implementation of Magna Carta of Women is still needed. A review of the GAD Budget Policy in 2010 revealed low compliance and poor-quality plans and reporting systems on implementation of Magna Carta of Women on the part of agencies.⁵¹
 - Women face challenges in getting access to health care. The privatization of hospitals and health care makes it more difficult for women to access high-quality health services.
 - There is a need to strengthen capacity building support provided by the Department of Interior and Local Government to fully implement national policies and laws in the local level, especially on capacity building/development for service providers

(healthcare, teachers/educators, police officers/law enforcement agents) (e.g., for trans persons having difficulty accessing services)

- **GAD fund utilization**

- Concerns have persisted about the continuity of GAD projects, which remained susceptible to changes in administration; the inadequacy of funds dedicated to GAD activities; the uncertain impacts of small loans on poor women; and the uncertainty over whether the benefits are reaching the poorest women in the poorest regions.⁵²
- There were several issues in the use of GAD funds at the local level e.g. at least 5% of Barangay LGU Internal Revenue Allotment should be allocated, but there are cases wherein the budgets for Civil Society, Persons with Disabilities, and Barangay Council for the Protection of Children are also lumped in the 5% GAD budget.
- There are differences in the implementation of the 5 % budget allocation for GAD due to the practice of lumping of funds.
- There is a need to strengthen the monitoring of the utilization of the GAD budget as part of the seal of good local governance. Monitoring is sometimes only done out of compliance.

- **Teenage pregnancies**

- Health and mobility restrictions during the pandemic paused all activities intended to promote measures to address teenage pregnancies.
- The country is now faced with the problem of early pregnancies which has increased the number of girls dropping out of school.
- There is a need for consultation among young people themselves on why teenage pregnancies is rising and what can be done.
- The Commission on Population and Development projected that by the end 2021, one hundred sixty thousand (160,00) adolescent minors will have become or would continue to be heads of families. This is a significant number of adolescents that need to be educated about their sexual and reproductive health as well as on the impact of unintended pregnancies on young women and girls. (source: See Executive Order 141, Adopting as a National Priority the Implementation of Measures the Root Causes of the Rising Number of Teenage Pregnancies and Mobilizing Government Agencies for the Purpose, 2021.)

- **Gender-based Violence**

- The Child Rights Coalition advocates for awareness and capacity on violence against children, which had slow progress in the last 5years. There has been a sustained threat to children with regards to gender-based violence including sexual exploitation. The need for public awareness on the agenda of eliminating all forms of violence against children becomes more important today and the pandemic even exacerbated the situation. According to Disrupting Harm household survey data, in the past year alone, 20% of internet-using children aged 12-17 in the Philippines were victims of grave instances of online sexual exploitation and abuse. In spite of this sustained threat, there is low awareness of the public including children and young people of the different forms of violence and how to prevent it. There is also a low awareness among child-victims and at-risk on where to report or who to talk to. Children would also tend to

- disclose to friends and peers. This would call for a capacity building program for children and youth responders and peer counselors.
- There is a need for public awareness on the boy-victims of different forms of sexual exploitation since the number of boy-victims has been significantly increasing. There is need to conduct further study on the depth and magnitude of sexual exploitation of boys in the Philippines.
 - There is a need to publicize and popularize the existing studies on different forms of gender-based violence for public awareness and capacity building.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- PCW has an active partnership with CSOs and women's groups in implementing programs at the national level. It has a gender pool of consultants coming from different organizations that supports the need for gender-responsive programming. There is also a National GAD Resource Pool of Trainers accredited by PCW.
- The *Child Rights Coalition* recommends that existing national plans should be anchored to international commitments in closing the gender gap.
- *Plan International* launched a research on Assessing Risks and Adaptive Capacities to Child Marriage in Mindanao was presented to BARRM. They also finalized a Research Management Response & Action Plan for presentation to the Management of Plan.
- *UNFPA* partners with different CSOs in addressing teenage pregnancy.
- *KNH Philippines*, through its partners, is promoting approaches in facilitating women to form Self-help groups towards sustaining community empowerment, also implementing child-focused community development programs that will fight severe child rights violations. *KNH Philippines* developed two gender modules for self help groups and cluster-level associations through its 14 partners in 18 different areas in the country.
- *ASMAE* Study on awareness on gender and GBV at the barangay level - Lack of appropriate info about gender and gender-based violence at the barangay level. There remains some confusion on how to differentiate gender, sex, and GBV in the community.
- *BPFA+25* reporting has been established and different CSOs (*PKKK*, *SIKAT*) and networks contribute to this mechanism.
- Gender-based violence watch groups were established in some areas particularly in Basey and Marabut Samar. VAWC officers in these areas are women leaders of self help groups.
- Women's federations *LIKAS* sit in the monitoring team at the municipal level in Tuy, Batangas.
- Gender indicators are indicated in monitoring plans of CSOs and partners e.g., Guiuan and Salcedo in Eastern Samar, Lantawan in Basilan, Kabankalan Negros Occidental, Sibutu Tawi-tawi.
- Good case studies of *IACAT* - PNP, e.g. DOT Pampanga, Palawan hotspots of trafficking which were able to establish one stop reporting booths.
- *ECPAT Philippines* actively partners with the local governments and private sectors in tourism destinations for the enactment of gender-inclusive and rights-based legislations on protecting children in travel and tourism. This partnership raises the accountability of the tourism sector and empowers them in protecting women and children as they contribute

efforts in raising public awareness including their clients and guests, capacity building on women and children protection among their personnel, and reporting to authorities. This also ensures the accountability of the government in fulfilling their duties and delivering gender-inclusive programs and services for the benefit of women and children in the tourism destinations.

- *KNH Philippines* through its partners are working closely with some local DSWD in providing FDS particularly on GST. There are partnerships with religious groups as well on FDS.
- *UNOCHA* ensures functionality of protection clusters in emergencies (women and children protection) in partnership with CSOs, and government agencies. There were coordination meetings in which indicators in humanitarian action developed to ensure protection of women and children e.g., Typhoon Rai in CARAGA region. CSOs' membership to the various sub-committees of CWC and the Inter-Agency councils (e.g. IACAT, IACACP, IACVAWC) currently in place.
- CSOs are active partners of the government in pushing for the agenda of eliminating gender-based violence and all forms of sexual exploitation. One coalition example comes from *ECPAT Philippines*, which provides thematic expertise in all government discussions including lobbying of gender-inclusive policies and legislations, capacity building of relevant stakeholders, facilitating child participation in the national and regional platforms, among others. It partners with the Department of Tourism for the program *Tourism Integrates, Support and Minds Women's Respect and Child Safety (TourISM WoRCS)*, which includes training and seminars to promote sustainable tourism practices that ensure that the rights of children and women are protected. It also works in partnership with the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordination Center in operating the Internet Reporting Hotline that receives reports from the public on online CSAM.
- GAD fund and budget is being accessed by women's groups like self help groups in rural communities e.g., Catanduanes, Negros, Sarangani.
- Indigenous peoples groups and women organizations have been calling for data disaggregation to determine extent of 'not-being-left-behind'. They recommend the institutionalization of data disaggregation based on ethnicity to determine extent of inclusion or exclusion and to inform planning and targeting. The latest Philippine Report to CEDAW talks of initiatives to harmonize data on women from various agencies, but the report does not reflect disaggregation based on ethnicity.



Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- Dialogues and token participations. CSOs now need to claim spaces more aggressively.
- Many CSOs are limited by their lack of technical capacity and funds not to mention the restrictions in democratic spaces and participation. Also, there is a lack in documenting their challenges, achievements and contributions.

Solutions and policy recommendations

- Public financing is the most reliable, sustainable and equitable source of financing for Water Sanitation and Supply (WSS). There is a need for WASH budget advocacy at the national level that look into:
 - Call for greater transparency in the allocation for WSS by

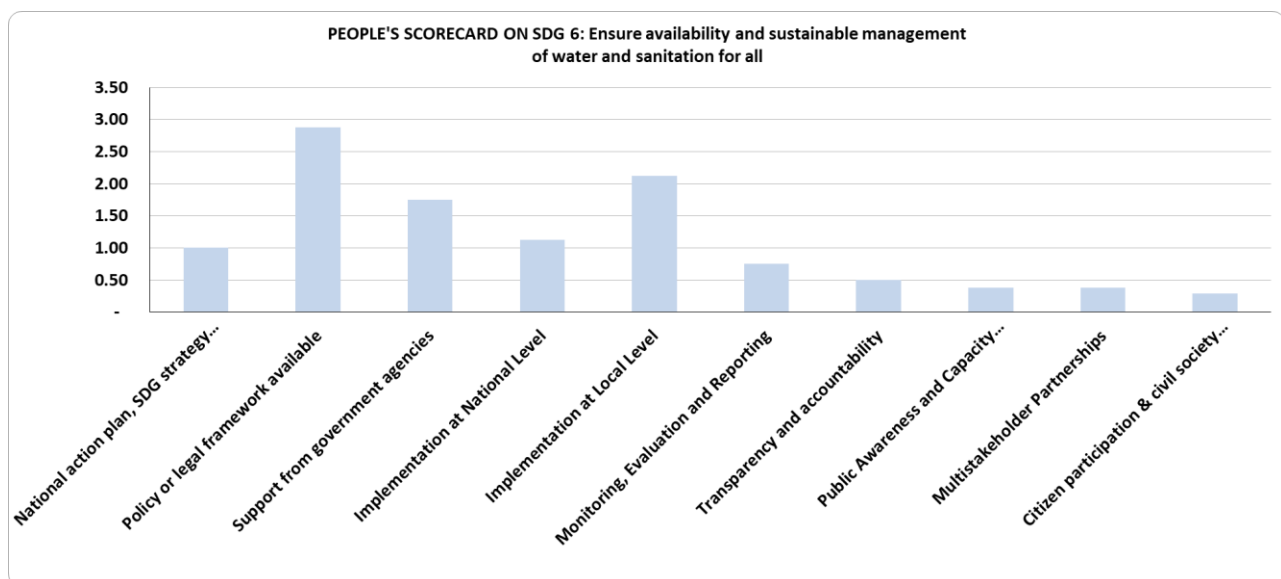
consolidating the budgets into one investment plan for better monitoring.

- Provide specific appropriations amounts for Water Sanitation and Supply (WSS) projects in multipurpose funds to ensure that allocation for WSS is not crowd out by other expenditures from the same fund.
 - Increase national government grants for lower income municipalities and strive to raise the share of NG grants in the total financing requirement under Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan.
 - Prioritize investment in areas with high incidence of unimproved facilities and those with no WSS facilities at all.
- To close the gap towards universal access to clean water and sanitation requires the construction of needed WSS facilities, such as water systems, toilets, septic and sewerage systems.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 6 had the highest mean score at 2.88, while citizen participation and civil society engagement ranked lowest with a mean score of 0.29.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	2.88
Support from government agencies	1.75
Implementation at National Level	1.13
Implementation at Local Level	2.13
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.75
Transparency and accountability	0.50
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.38
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.38
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.29

Policy

- Public financing is the most reliable, sustainable and equitable source of financing for Water Sanitation and Supply (WSS). There is a need for WASH budget advocacy at the national level that look into:
 - Call for greater transparency in the allocation for WSS by consolidating the budgets into one investment plan for better monitoring.
 - Provide specific appropriations amounts for Water Sanitation and Supply (WSS) projects in multipurpose funds to ensure that allocation for WSS is not crowd out by other expenditures from the same fund.
 - Increase national government grants for lower income municipalities and strive to raise the share of NG grants in the total financing requirement under Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan.
 - Prioritize investment in areas with high incidence of unimproved facilities and those with no WSS facilities at all.

Situationer

- Corruption is making water expensive for the general public.
- To close the gap towards universal access to clean water and sanitation requires the construction of needed WSS facilities, such as water systems, toilets, septic and sewerage systems—all of which are capital intensive. There is an urgent need to mobilize finances to address this challenge.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- Democratic and civil society spaces were restricted over the years. This led to less of dialogues and token participations. CSOs now need to claim spaces more aggressively.
- Many CSOs are limited by their lack of technical capacity and funds not to mention the restrictions in democratic spaces and participation. Also, there is a lack in documenting their challenges, achievements and contributions.



Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Trends

- Big ticket projects of the government such as the continued use of coal-fired power plants (CFPP), mega dams (Kaliwa dam), and the proposed nuclear power run contrary to the so-called “green jobs”.
- The Department of Energy (DOE) bias for baseload plants (coal, nuclear) is reflected in assumptions that favor baseloads: baseload share in the capacity mix will remain at 70% until 2040; change in calculation method of baseload share from % of peak load to % of total supply; and change in reserve requirement from 4% of peak plus backups for the 2 largest generating units on the grid, to 25% of peak.⁵³
- The main driver for renewable energy deployment are the following: declining prices, which increasingly make the process consumer-/market-driven; the climate crisis, which is perceived as a climate emergency; the global disinvestment in fossil-fuels, which is most discernible in the coal sector but is also palpable in mainstream industry; and projections around “peak demand”, which is projected to happen before 2030.⁵⁴

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- There is still a huge dependence on fossil-fuel energy sources amid the slow momentum towards shifting to renewable energy.
- As of start-2018, 2.78 million households (~13.9 million persons) still have no access to electricity.⁵⁵
- A comparable number of households do not have 24-hour electricity service. Where 24-

hour electricity is provided, service is often poor (long / frequent power outages, very high electricity rates)

- Fossil fuel share in the generation mix remains at around 75%, most of it from coal power plants.
- The DOE’s bias for baseloads and electric utility resistance, particularly to solar rooftops, makes renewable energy deployment sluggish because utilities perceive it as a threat.

Solutions and policy recommendations

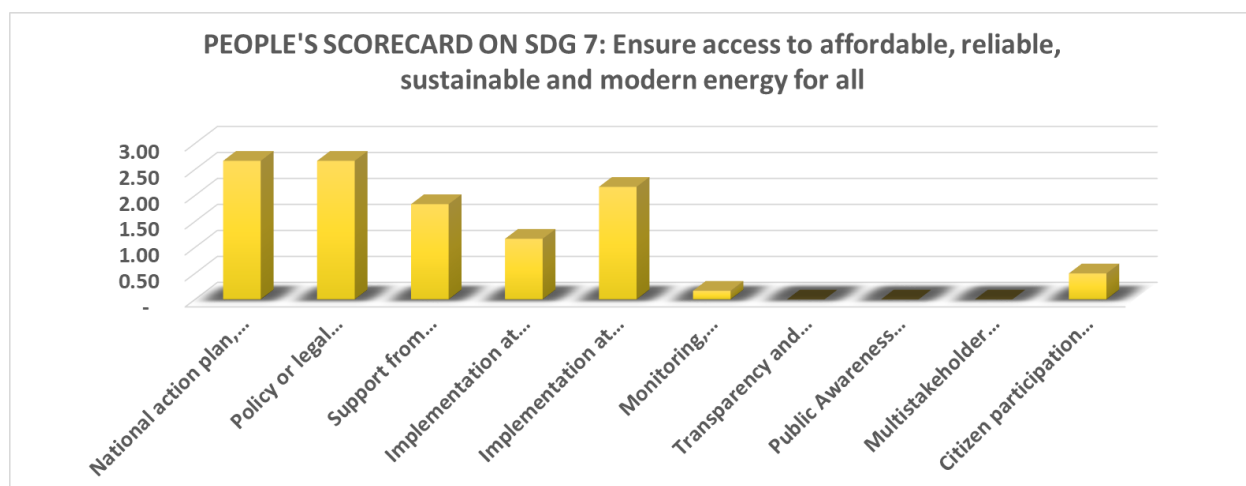
- Review the DOE assumptions and redo the Philippine Energy Plan based on realistic assumptions.
- Harmonize the Philippine Energy policies with the country's international climate commitments.
- Initiate a planned gradual phase-out of fossil-fuels as the technologies and business models for renewables become viable.
- Give priority to 100% affordable and sustainable electrification of communities through energy efficiency and conservation and renewable energy deployment.
- Use an aggressive program in Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Renewable Energy as a jump off point for industrial diversification and development based on green investments and green jobs.
- Remove existing barriers to the deployment of solar, wind and other renewables. Include renewables among priority industries that will receive government support.
- Review the government's coal-based baseload projects in the pipeline.
- Renewable energy is a sunrise industry and provide countries with an opportunity to invite green investments and create green jobs; build other industries around them; and create new business ecosystems around climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

SDG 7 scored highest in terms of the “availability of policy and legal framework” and “national action plan, SDG strategy and budget” with mean scores of 2.67. Meanwhile, “transparency and accountability”, “public awareness and capacity building”, and “multistakeholder partnerships” all registered zero (0) mean.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	2.67
Policy or legal framework available	2.67
Support from government agencies	1.83
Implementation at National Level	1.17
Implementation at Local Level	2.17
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.17
Transparency and accountability	0.00
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.00
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.00
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.50

Policy

- The Philippines pushed for the passage of Green Jobs Act, however, the big ticket projects of the government such as the continued use of coal-fired power plants (CFPP), mega dams (Kaliwa dam), and the proposed nuclear power runs contrary to the so-called “green jobs”.
- The Department of Energy (DOE) bias for baseload plants (coal, nuclear) is reflected in several questionable assumptions that favor baseloads:
 - baseload share in the capacity mix will remain at 70% until 2040;
 - change in calculation method of baseload share from % of peak load to % of total supply;
 - change in reserve requirement from 4% of peak plus backups for the 2 largest generating units on the grid, to 25% of peak, which effectively means backups for more than 15 of the largest generating units on the grid.⁵⁶

Situationer

- There is still a huge dependence on fossil-fuel energy sources amid the slow momentum towards shifting to renewable energy. The 'just transition' still needs to be planned,
- Leyte is one of the sources of clean energy for the country with the Leyte Geothermal Power Plant.
- As of start-2018, 2.78 million households (~13.9 million persons) still have no access to electricity.⁵⁷
- A comparable number of households do not have 24-hour electricity service.
- Where 24-hour electricity is provided, service is often poor (long and/or frequent power outages, very high electricity rates)
- Fossil fuel share in the generation mix remains at around 75%, most of it from coal power plants
- The prices in solar, wind and battery storage are declining. This provides new opportunities to improve access. However, the DOE’s bias for baseloads and electric utility resistance, particularly to solar rooftops, makes renewable energy deployment sluggish because utilities perceive it as a threat.
- The main driver for renewable energy deployment are the following:
 - declining prices, which will increasingly make the process consumer-/market-driven;
 - the climate crisis, which is more and more perceived as a climate emergency;
 - the global disinvestment in fossil-fuels, which is most discernible in the coal sector but is also palpable in mainstream industry; and
 - projections around “peak demand”, which is projected to happen before 2030.⁵⁸

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- **Civil Society Recommendations:**
 - Review the DOE assumptions which led it to expect that the baseload share in the energy mix will remain at 70% of peak demand until 2040, and redo the Philippine Energy Plan based on a more realistic set of assumptions.
 - Harmonize the Philippine Energy policies with the country's international climate commitments.

- Initiate a planned gradual phase-out of fossil-fuels as the technologies and business models for renewables become viable.
- Give priority to 100% electrification of communities in a way that is both affordable and sustainable through energy efficiency and conservation and renewable energy deployment.
- Use an aggressive program in Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Renewable Energy as a jump off point for industrial diversification and development based on green investments and green jobs.
- Remove existing barriers to the deployment of solar, wind and other renewables.
- Include renewables among priority industries that will receive government support.
- Review the government's coal-based baseload projects in the pipeline. Meet all new demands with renewables.
- Renewable energy is a sunrise industry and provide countries with an opportunity to invite green investments and create green jobs. They also provide an opportunity to build other industries around them and create new business ecosystems around climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. A wrong government/private sector decisions on the fossil-fuel vs. renewables options may saddle the country with stranded assets, even higher electricity rates in the future, and lost opportunities by taking the wrong road.



Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Trends

- The economic recession due to COVID-19 led to a dramatic 40 percent drop in expected public revenues for 2020, causing the deficit to more than double. The government accelerated borrowing. Program and project loans for 2020 tripled from the amounts initially projected before COVID-19. The severe restrictions imposed by the government had a drastic effect on the economy.⁵⁹ Businesses were allowed to open gradually starting in June 2020 but still do not operate at full capacity anywhere in the country.⁶⁰ The increase in public spending in response to COVID-19 has been minimal, with the *Bayanihan* to Recover As One Act (Bayanihan II) allotting only \$2.8 billion in supplemental appropriations.⁶¹
- Inflows from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) amount to US\$25 to 30 million a year. These OFWs comprise about eleven percent of the population.⁶² The Philippines has become a nation dependent on sending its people to work in other countries to keep its coffers full and support families.
- The Philippines trails behind its neighbors when it comes to financing for its MSMEs. According to an ADB report, bank loans to MSMEs in 2019 was equivalent to 30.3% of Thailand's GDP, followed by Malaysia (18.5%), Singapore (15.1% [2018]), the Lao PDR (8.5%), Indonesia (7.0%), the Philippines (3.2%), and Myanmar (1.0% [2018]).
- After 30 years of agrarian reform implementation in the post-Marcos era, vast tracts of land remain in the grip of private hands due to a stalled agrarian reform program. As of May 2019, DAR still has a

whopping 600,000 hectares to be distributed to farmers under its agrarian reform program with only three years left under the current dispensation.⁶³

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- The Philippine economy contracted by 9.5 percent in 2020. Labor was particularly affected: unemployment peaked at 17.6 percent in April 2020 and eased down to 8.7 percent in October 2020, where it has remained as of January 2021. However, several sectors such as transportation, tourism, and leisure continue to have limited operations. Underemployment remains at 16 percent in January 2021 after reaching 18.9 percent in April 2020.⁶⁴ The ability of the Philippine economy to reclaim its pre-COVID-19 growth momentum remains uncertain. The government continues to prioritize liberalization policies favoring foreign corporations instead of boosting local corporations as main drivers of post-COVID economic recovery.
- The current policy initiatives such as accelerated conversion of agricultural lands into industrial, commercial and residential estates and the Rice Tariffication Law has meant the further marketization of agriculture to benefit big business, including those representing global capital.⁶⁵
- The Government failed to increase the productivity and rural incomes of farmers, much less facilitate their access to innovative farming techniques as outlined in its Philippine Development Plan. Small farmers, tenants and agricultural workers are now left at the mercy of market forces, with hardly any support from government as evidenced by its dismally low productivity levels and the sputtering of the agrarian reform program.⁶⁶
- Currently the Philippine government extends its social protection programs (Philhealth, Pag-Ibig, SSS) to migrant workers. But migrant workers pay the full contribution to these programs (except sea-

based workers). More than half of the migrant workers are in semi-skilled and low-skilled job categories characterized by low wages and exclusion from social protection.

- The new commitments under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP) and trade agreements coupled with policies that ease restrictions on foreign investments constitute a one-two punch against small Filipino businesses, and the negative impact would inevitably affect their workers as well. MSMEs provide for more than 62 percent of jobs in the Philippines. The default policy now is to subject MSMEs to more foreign competition without the requisite level of support that would make them competitive.

Solutions and policy recommendations

- Strengthen efforts on the implementation of Philippine Program Against Child Labor (PPACL) with higher budget allocation and improved monitoring and evaluation to lift children out of child labor.
- Develop the state's 'activist' orientation so that it proactively intervenes to develop the country's domestic industries, including MSMEs, effectively regulates the private sector and upholds the rights of its people, especially poor and low-income groups, including the marginalized and socially excluded, and protects and promotes the environment.⁶⁷ Promote the political space and generate resources to help strengthen social movements, trade unions and civil society so that they can effectively tip the balance of power and ensure that policies and programs benefit the majority of Filipinos who are poor and socially excluded.⁶⁸
- Formulate a Treaty among ASEAN members states to hold accountable the TNCs in the Region to comply with the international

standards for human rights and due diligence for responsible business conduct.

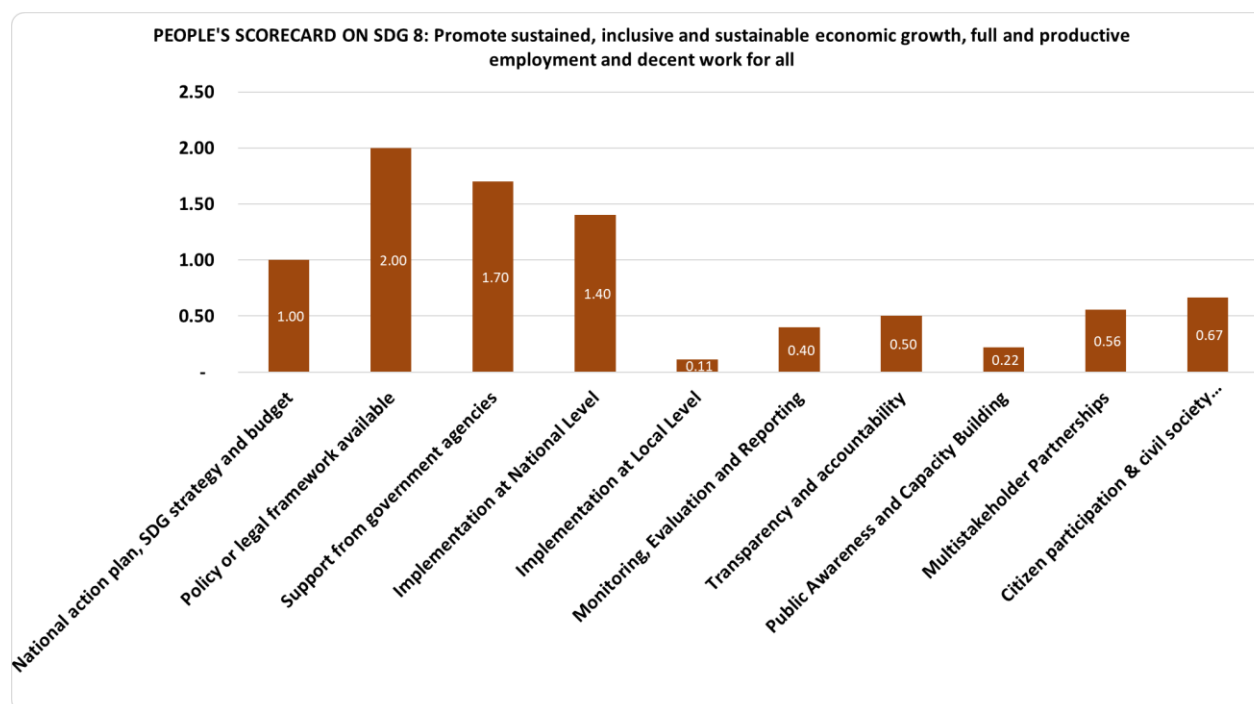
- Catalyze the process of structural transformation through clean, green agro-industrialization and the creation and strengthening of decent work. Significantly invest in clean and green technologies, renewable energy and reduce, if not ultimately phase out, dirty technology in the country's production system.
- Significantly increase public investment in all sectors: agriculture, industry and manufacturing, services so that labor productivity growth significantly increases;
- Ensure that the 'fruits' of labor productivity growth is equitably shared between capitalists and workers so that decent incomes, including benefits, are adequately provided. Ensure smooth transition of workers from informal to formal, from vulnerable to stable, and from precarious to regular employment across all three sectors so that decent work is achieved;
- Provide wider options for decent job opportunities for women, outside of care work.
- To break the vicious cycle of (forced) migration, a sound sustainable return and reintegration program should be developed and made available to returning workers. The National Reintegration Center for OFWS should convene consultations amongst returned and active OFWs for ideas on sustainable reintegration programs and projects. In the short and medium term, the unilateral extension of social protection programs to all migrant workers is good. But government must continue efforts to advocate and negotiate with countries of destination so migrant workers can access social protection programs. Where migrant workers are already included, for Philippine government to facilitate portability and totalization of social security contributions through the forging of social security agreements (SSAs)

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 8 had the highest mean score at 2.00, while implementation at the local level ranked lowest with a mean score of 0.11.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	2.00
Support from government agencies	1.70
Implementation at National Level	1.40
Implementation at Local Level	0.11
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.40
Transparency and accountability	0.50
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.22

Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.56
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.67

Policy

- The NEDA launched the *AmBisyon Natin 2040* initiative in 2015. Through surveys and focus group discussions, NEDA reached out to citizens, especially youth, to understand how Filipinos envision national development in the long term.⁶⁹ The results of this study served as the basis for NEDA to conclude that what Filipinos aspire to in 2040 is achieving a strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life.⁷⁰
- The policy framework is based on the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022 with the NEDA at the helm. This was cascaded to the local level through Executive Order No. 27 (2017). With this, SDG should be mainstreamed by all national agencies, including the Department of Interior and Local Government, which should cascade it to the Local Government Units (LGUs) with technical /financial assistance.
- The national government budget is the most significant and influential financing source, along with the LGU's IRA in light of the recent implementation of the Mandanas Ruling.
- **Private and Foreign Investments**
 - The Philippines assigns an important role to the private sector in pursuing economic growth and national development. Article II, section 20 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution declares that the “State recognizes the indispensable role of the private sector, encourages private enterprise, and provides incentives to needed investments.”⁷¹
 - Duterte signed last March 2, 2022 Republic Act 11647, which aims to promote foreign investments by amending the Foreign Investments Act of 1991. The new law would now allow foreign investments in more areas formerly reserved for Filipinos. Even the reservation on entry into micro and small domestic enterprises has been eased by lowering the paid in equity capital requirement from \$500,000 in the old law to \$200,000.
 - The Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE) was enacted in March 2021. That law reduced corporate income tax rates from 30 to 25 percent and streamlined fiscal incentives to investment. The corporate income tax rates for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) were pushed down even lower, to 20 percent. The Department of Finance (DOF), which dubbed the tax reform law the “largest fiscal stimulus program for enterprises in the country’s history,” is hopeful that CREATE will improve the country’s ability to attract investments.³⁵⁷²
- **COVID-19 Pandemic**
 - The economic recession due to COVID-19 has led to a dramatic fall in public revenues, prompting the government to accelerate borrowing. Program and project loans for 2020 tripled from the amounts initially projected before COVID-19. The severe restrictions imposed by the government had a drastic effect on the economy.⁷³ The NCR and the central and southern Luzon regions, where national economic activity is highly concentrated, went through the longest period under the strictest quarantine category. Businesses were allowed to open gradually starting in June 2020 but still do not operate

at full capacity anywhere in the country. Large mass gatherings were still prohibited nationwide as of January 2021.⁷⁴

- During the COVID-19 lockdowns, to mitigate the effects of business closures and loss of jobs, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has been tasked with issuing an emergency cash subsidy called the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), which includes 4Ps beneficiaries. The SAP program was expected to distribute cash aid of \$100–160 for two months and in tranches, prioritizing poor households. By April 2020 the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) had released half of the \$4 billion pledged by the government to some 18 million poor households.⁷⁵
- **Child Labour.** There is a need to continue and strengthen current efforts on the implementation of Philippine Program Against Child Labor (PPACL) with higher budget allocation and improved monitoring and evaluation to lift children out of child labor sooner than later.
- **Agriculture**
 - The current policy initiatives of government such as accelerated conversion of agricultural lands into industrial, commercial and residential estates and the rice tariffication law has meant the further marketization of agriculture to benefit big business, including those representing global capital.⁷⁶
- **Migrant Workers**
 - The country's growth rates in 2020 are impressive. What has largely been invisible in the official narrative is that the impressive growth rates is significantly driven by household consumption fueled by large-scale remittance inflows from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to the tune of US\$25 to 30 million a year. These OFWs comprise about eleven percent of the population (1) Stock Estimate of Overseas Filipinos.⁷⁷
 - Cognizant of the vulnerabilities of Filipino migrant workers and their families, government enacted laws, developed programs and services and set up structures that focus on migration to ensure protection for migrant workers at all stages of the migration cycle.
 - Job specific policies as well as gendered programs such as the Household Service Workers Policy Reform package for migrant domestic workers including bilateral agreements/ memorandum of understanding with countries of destination are forged. The Philippines perhaps is the only country of origin that has forged the most number of bilateral labor agreements for its land-based and sea-based workers.
 - In terms of representation, the Philippines is the only country perhaps in the world where the migrant sector is represented in tripartite bodies of the Labor Department such as the Decent Work Advisory Committee and the National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council.
 - To ensure their political participation, the Overseas Absentee Voting act was enacted in 2003 to give back the right of suffrage to overseas Filipinos so they can participate in national elections in the Philippines.
 - The Philippines is also commended for its information and education programs for migrants such as the CPDEP (Comprehensive Pre-departure education program), pre-employment orientation seminar, pre-departure orientation seminar (PDOS) and post-

arrival orientation seminar (PAOS). A law was just enacted for the production and distribution of an OFW Handbook.

- Currently the Philippine government extends its social protection programs to migrant workers (Philhealth, Pag-Ibig, SSS). But migrant workers pay the full contribution to these programs (except sea-based workers).
- The Philippines will create a single Department that will serve as the umbrella department to respond to any and all concerns of Filipinos overseas and their families. Consequently, various existing migration agencies will be abolished.

Trends

• MSMEs

- The Philippines trails behind its neighbors when it comes to financing for its MSMEs. According to an ADB report, bank loans to MSMEs in 2019 was equivalent to 30.3% of Thailand's GDP, followed by Malaysia (18.5%), Singapore (15.1% [2018]), the Lao PDR (8.5%), Indonesia (7.0%), the Philippines (3.2%), and Myanmar (1.0% [2018]). In US dollar terms, Thailand's MSME lending was \$218 billion in 2019, followed by Indonesia (\$80 billion), Malaysia (\$68 billion), Singapore (\$57 billion), the Philippines (\$12 billion), the Lao PDR (\$1.6 billion), and Myanmar (\$772 million) (ADB).
- There are inclusive business models involving marginalized sectors, however, credit assistance for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) remains to be inaccessible to workers in informal economies, which are mostly women. There is also a need for technical and financial assistance for organizing and making the MSMEs a legal entity.
- Allocation for MSME rose to at ₱2B-₱3B levels in 2017 onwards due to *the Pondo Para sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso* Program (5P). Small Business Corporation allocated ₱100 million for financing services in 2014; financing facility for MSME increased substantially upon the implementation of the 5P starting in 2017 GAA amounting to ₱1 billion. For the 2019 GAA and 2020 Budget Law, the allocation for the program increased to ₱1.5 billion.

• Economic Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

- Enjoying impressive economic growth in the past two decades by its own historical standards, the Philippines was on the cusp of becoming an upper-middle-income country when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in the first quarter of 2020.⁷⁸
- The economic recession due to COVID-19 led to a dramatic 40 percent drop in expected public revenues for 2020, causing the deficit to more than double. The increase in public spending in response to COVID-19 has been minimal, with the *Bayanihan* to Recover As One Act (Bayanihan II) allotting only \$2.8 billion in supplemental appropriations.⁷⁹
- The Philippine economy contracted by 9.5 percent in 2020, although the decline slowed from -16.9 percent in the second quarter to -8.3 percent in the fourth quarter. It is becoming clearer that economic recovery will be more U-shaped than V-shaped, even as some pundits expect it to regain its lost vitality in late 2022 at the earliest. In any case, the pandemic has had a profound impact on how growth and development are to be pursued from this point forward. Enterprises are forced

to rethink their business models as industries experience dramatic shifts in their economic importance. Labor was particularly affected: unemployment peaked at 17.6 percent in April 2020 and eased down to 8.7 percent in October 2020, where it has remained as of January 2021. However, several sectors such as transportation, tourism, and leisure continue to have limited operations. Underemployment remains at 16 percent in January 2021 after reaching 18.9 percent in April 2020.⁸⁰

- Some economists predict not a V-shaped or U-shaped recovery, but a K-shaped one. They anticipate that the growth trajectories of different segments of the economy post-COVID-19 will follow diverging paths. The pandemic clearly does not affect the various economic sectors equally. Several industries are expected to recover quickly and perform well thereafter, while other industries will continue to decline. For instance, the profitability of technology, online retail, and digital financial services have skyrocketed during the pandemic while the travel, tourism, and entertainment industries have seen a prolonged contraction.⁹ This asymmetric impact will worsen inequality, especially in the Philippines, where a significant proportion of workers earning a living wage or lower are employed in services that are adversely affected by the pandemic.⁸¹
- The ability of the Philippine economy to reclaim its pre-COVID-19 growth momentum remains uncertain. Without rapid economic expansion, pursuing sustainable and inclusive development may prove to be even more difficult. Worse, previous gains might have already been reversed. Radical shifts in the economy within a short period of time have varying effects on the different income classes, likely exacerbating inequality and driving the hardest-hit households toward intergenerational poverty.⁸²
- Former socioeconomic planning secretary Solita Monsod pointed out that the reduction in corporate tax rates will deprive the government of much-needed resources to help people cope with COVID-19. Further, she noted that although MSMEs comprise 99.5 percent of the total number of establishments in the country (1,000,506), only 2 percent of them will benefit from CREATE, as the overwhelming majority of these businesses are not incorporated. Large enterprises, which make up the remaining 0.5 percent, are set to enjoy huge tax cuts. Monsod also expressed concern about whether enterprises will invest the estimated \$12 billion in forgone government revenue over the next five years in revitalizing their businesses and creating more jobs for Filipino workers, as the DOF assumes.³⁶⁸³
- The government's research agency, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), has noted that even with the SAP, about 2.8 million Filipinos will become poor as a result of the pandemic. Thus, there is a need to address the long-term impact of the pandemic on poverty. PIDS has estimated that poverty incidence will spike at between 15.5 and 17.5 percent in 2021.⁴⁸⁸⁴
- There is huge unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This needs to be addressed, not only through subsidies and cash transfers, but through support to small and medium entrepreneurship.

- **Agriculture**

- After thirty years of agrarian reform implementation in the post-Marcos era, vast tracts of land remain in the grip of private hands due to a stalled agrarian reform program. As of May 2019, DAR still has a whopping 600,000 hectares to be distributed to farmers under its agrarian reform program with only three years left under the current dispensation.⁸⁵
- The Government failed to increase the productivity and rural incomes of farmers, much less facilitate their access to innovative farming techniques as outlined in its Philippine Development Plan. Small farmers, tenants and agricultural workers are now left more and more at the mercy of market forces, with hardly any support from government as evidenced by its dismally low productivity levels and the sputtering of the agrarian reform program.⁸⁶

- **Employment**

- As people in the country cannot afford generally to be unemployed, especially with no adequate social security or safety nets to fall back, a huge chunk of the population have no choice but to work. Many of them are underemployed, engaged in precarious and vulnerable work, and can be found in both the formal and informal sectors.⁸⁷
- Given women have lower labor force participation rates, they are more likely to register in the informal sector, many of them working as unpaid family workers.⁸⁸

- **Migrant Workers**

- The Philippines has become a nation dependent on sending its people to work in other countries to keep its coffers full and keep bodies and souls of Filipino families together. For as long as the country's growth rates remain significantly bloated due to the 'forced migration' of Filipinos working abroad, then GDP levels cannot, should not, be an indicator of development. In this regard, the 'source' of growth matters in determining the 'quality' of development.⁸⁹
- Filipino families are largely subsidized by foreign-denominated currencies converted into pesos, thanks to an OFW relative, has translated into the emergence of a growing middle-class with money to burn; consequently, oligarchic corporate networks have 'followed the money,' so to speak, by providing services such as in real estate, construction of malls, houses and condominiums, rentals and other economic activities that generally cater to this recently risen demographic, further cementing the observation that the Philippines is a consumption-driven economy (rather than investment-driven).⁹⁰
- Philippines is approaching its 5th decade of overseas employment. It started in the 1970s with only tens of thousands of migrant workers. By 2006, the one million mark was breached and 10 years later, the number doubled at more than 2 million migrant workers or some 6,000 workers/ day.
- More than half of the migrant workers are in semi-skilled and low-skilled job categories –characterized by low wages and exclusion from social protection programs.
- With the Philippine economy remaining underdeveloped, labor migration out of compulsion will continue in the years to come, despite developments in major countries of destination such as the Gulf States implementing more stringent

measures to restrict entry of migrant workers. More over, countries of destination likewise experience the impact of prolonged economic crisis and thus compel both men and women in the households to find employment, and thus paves the way for a steady demand for domestic workers and caregivers whose situation we can predict to go from bad to worse as the households are not spared from the impact of the crises.

- Notwithstanding these realities in the countries of destination, without viable decent job options in the Philippines, migrant workers will endure their living and working conditions for as long as they can until they can no longer postpone their eventual return.
- Mass migration drains the Philippines of its own work force, many of whom, we invested in in terms of their education and training. The exodus of our competent health workers leaves us with an inferior health care delivery system; A similar trend goes for other professions in applied sciences who are much needed for our own development requirements.
- "More than 20% of male migrant workers are 45 years and above and remain active OFWs; by the time they come back home for good, they will have difficulty finding jobs in the Philippines because of their age (despite the Anti-Age Discrimination Law in place);
- Despite the presence of laws and government structures in place, violations of migrants' rights continue and persist. It could be for various reasons such as low level of awareness of their rights and the laws that express these rights; weak implementation of the laws; lack of monitoring mechanism; lack of coordination between and amongst agencies of government; lack of support and cooperation from countries of transit and destination;
- GATS mode 4 is purposively for highly-skilled workers only and does not ease immigration procedures for all other types of migrant workers; the same is true for JPEPA and related agreements where there are strict requirements for migrant workers

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- **CSO Position:**

- **Foreign Investments**

- The government continues to prioritize liberalization policies favoring foreign corporations instead of boosting local corporations as main drivers of post-COVID economic recovery. It seems opening up the economy to the entry of foreign corporations is the best this government can offer.
- Failing to push for amendments to the Constitution to remove restrictions to foreign ownership and participation, Duterte and the proponents of the law have instead adopted this piecemeal approach; pushing the amendments to foreign investments act, the public services act and retail trade liberalization act.
- This wave of investment liberalization should be viewed in connection with the strong push as well for trade liberalization via FTAs like RCEP. The new commitments under RCEP and trade agreements coupled with these policies that

ease restrictions on foreign investments constitute a one-two punch against small Filipino businesses, and the negative impact would inevitably affect their workers as well. MSMEs provide for more than 62 percent of jobs in the Philippines.

○ **MSMEs**

- Develop the state's 'activist' orientation so that it proactively intervenes to develop the country's domestic industries, including MSMEs, effectively regulates the private sector and upholds the rights of its people, especially poor and low-income groups, including the marginalized and socially excluded, and protects and promotes the environment.⁹¹
- MSMEs, which account for 99.5 percent of all enterprises in the country, are constantly praised for their very important role in developing the Philippine economy, creating jobs and reducing poverty. Yet the default policy now is to subject these enterprises to more foreign competition without the requisite level of support that would make them competitive.
- Need data on MSMEs that is easily available, including on budgetary allocations
- Increased funding for 5Ps in 2017 onwards is a step in the right direction but still insubstantial if the country is to make a dent in moving most MSMEs into formality, increased business and financial stability.
- Shared Service Facility (SSF) is geared towards increasing the productivity of MSMEs that comprise the overwhelming majority of businesses in the country. Yet only a miniscule amount is provided : at its peak it received 1B in 2018 while the country's conditional cash transfer program has consistently received anywhere from P40 to 70B a year. This raises questions on why there is significant funding for social assistance but very little for productivity-enhancing schemes. Furthermore, since 2018, funding for SSF has been decreasing.
- Budget increase, while welcome, is insubstantial. This is because 99.6 % of all businesses in the Philippines come from this sector. So a budget of P4.17 M is way too small.
- There are laudable programs involving miniscule budgetary allocations. Considering that these can be considered productivity-enhancing investments targeting the poor working majority, significantly hiking public investment (to rival CCT at the very least) in these programs should be ensured.
- Why are banks regularly penalized for not faithfully adhering to the Magna Carta for MSMEs which dictate that 10% of a bank's portfolio go to MSME financing such that an amount of around P21M is actually raised? Government should address the structural barriers that hamper MSMEs ability to access financing from the formal lending sector.
- Government needs to assess how the loans performed in enhancing the productivity and business and financial stability of the recipient programs.
- There is a need to emphasize social protection for workers as an essential part of the bottom-line.

○ **Trade Agreements**

- Promote the political space and generate resources to help strengthen social movements, trade unions and civil society so that they can effectively tip the

balance of power and ensure that policies and programs benefit the majority of Filipinos who are poor and socially excluded.⁹²

- Formulate a Treaty among ASEAN members states (participated in by governments, the ASEAN Trade Union Council, the ASEAN Confederation of Employers, CSOs and international organizations –e.g. ILO, UN, OECD, etc.) to hold accountable the TNCs in the ASEAN region to comply with the international standards for human rights due diligence for responsible business conduct. These international standards are as follows: (a) The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; (b) The ILO’s Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE Declaration); and (c) The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and related Due Diligence Guidance. This will ensure that TNCs will enforce the application of human rights (including labor rights) due diligence by all their companies wherever they operate as well as all their suppliers at different levels of the global supply chain. At the minimum, the following rights should be respected: (a) The right to a living wage and to a healthy and safe workplace; (b) The right to organize in trade unions and bargain collectively; (c) The prohibition of child labor and forced labor; and (d) The prohibition of discrimination against workers based on their gender, race, ethnicity, etc.
- Important elements to these include a sound industrial policy, sustainable agricultural policy, decent living wages and other rights at work, social protection, as well as promotion of social dialogue and workers organization.
- Trade agreements must be reviewed; the terms of reference changed drastically to ensure that the benefits of these redound to equality and empowerment of the population.
- Trade policies must be one that promote growth and development for all and prevent displacement and further impoverishment of the population. Otherwise, it can lead to forced migration/ migration out of compulsion.

○ **Decent Work⁹³**

- Catalyze the process of structural transformation through clean, green agro-industrialization and the creation and strengthening of decent work.
- Significantly increase public investment in all sectors: agriculture, industry and manufacturing, services so that labor productivity growth significantly increases;
- Ensure that the ‘fruits’ of labor productivity growth is equitably shared between capitalists and workers so that decent incomes, including benefits, are adequately provided;
- Transition workers from informal to formal, from vulnerable to stable, and from precarious to regular employment across all three sectors so that decent work is achieved;
- Significantly invest in clean and green technologies, renewable energy and reduce, if not ultimately phase out, dirty technology in the country’s production system.

○ **Women workers**

- Government should provide wider options for decent job opportunities for women, outside of care work; a wide array of skills options should also be made available to women workers
- We must change the narrative of women's work, whether in the country or overseas, so there is proper valuation and recognition of women's work. Changing the narrative of women in the world of work includes embracing their being women with sexual and reproductive health rights as different from male workers.
- Women workers' voices, participation and agency must be promoted and respected especially in crafting policies that impact on them; They must not be seen as mere recipients of government programs and services but as critical stakeholder in migration governance.

○ **Migrant Workers**

- To break the vicious cycle of (forced) migration, a sound sustainable return and reintegration program should be developed and made available to returning workers. But this can only thrive in an environment where our national economy thrives.
- In the short and medium term, the unilateral extension of social protection programs to all migrant workers is good. But government must continue efforts to advocate and negotiate with countries of destination so migrant workers can access social protection programs.
- Where migrant workers are already included, for Philippine government to facilitate portability and totalization of social security contributions through the forging of social security agreements (SSAs)
- For return and reintegration – the National Reintegration Center for OFWS should convene consultations amongst returned and active OFWs for ideas on sustainable reintegration programs and projects
- Government must conduct a performance and finance audit of all migration agencies to rationalize their abolition and to serve as basis for the creation of the new Department. For effective implementation, monitoring mechanisms must be put in place. Adequate human and financial resources must be allocated in a timely manner. Periodic assessment and evaluation must be conducted in a transparent manner.

○ **Children⁹⁴**

- More livelihood programs for parents and more scholarships to support children and not force them to work to sustain their education;
- As long as it is not forced and they work after school hours, children 15 and above should be provided a safe work environment so there should be stricter implementation of laws on this;
- There should be career assessment, and studies on job trends and Skills learned in school should match the jobs needed by companies;
- Strengthen 4Ps by improving its monitoring system, and more accountability platforms;
- Children should be consulted about the changes in laws affecting them

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Trends

- Most infrastructure projects in recent decades were foreign assisted, emphasizing the role of ODA as a stable source of development funding for the Philippines.⁹⁵
- Although public-private partnerships (PPPs) play a major role in financing BBB, the program remains heavily reliant on ODA, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 29 percent of the \$86 billion cost of approved projects is planned to be funded through this scheme. ODA was slated to fund 49 percent of the total amount, while the remaining 22 percent would be funded from government coffers.⁹⁶
- Digital innovations are corporate-controlled and corporate-driven.
- It is most likely that the MRP budget is embedded across specific budget line items of the relevant agencies, but unfortunately, the details are not disclosed in the budget documents. There is no clear budget line items for the MRP budget

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- Before *Build, Build, Build (BBB)* program, greatly needed investments in infrastructure have been largely neglected since the 1980s, as the Philippines grappled with one fiscal and financial crisis after another until the late 2000s.⁹⁷
- Snags in implementation of BBB have caused the program to proceed slowly since even before the pandemic. For instance, the

master list of projects had to be modified as some of the planned big projects—which eventually turned out to be infeasible—were replaced with smaller, more doable ones.⁹⁸ The low rate of disbursement of BBB funds—less than half of total obligations on average from 2017 to 2019—by the two agencies mainly responsible for the program, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Transportation (DOTr), “signals slow, inefficient project implementation.”⁹⁹

- The neo-liberal development framework frustrated the country’s national industrialization, leaving Philippine manufacturing and agriculture sectors underdeveloped. It remains a labor exporting country unable to generate meaningful jobs. It depends on imported goods for its food security as its resources are plundered by big local and foreign corporations. Farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, urban poor communities are driven out of their sources of livelihoods and abodes to accommodate projects and businesses that discriminate against their right to development and governance.

Solutions and policy recommendations

- Industrial policy should be the main development strategy to establish efficient, beneficial firms that generate positive multipliers effect throughout the economy. The special and differential treatment (SDT) agreed upon in WTO and other regional trade agreements should be renegotiated given the latest economic theories that show industrial policy is a necessary, legitimate and doable goal for developing countries.
- Even if developed countries are resistant, developing countries' governments should proceed with efforts to collaborate with

private industry, academe, science and technology sector, the labor and legal sectors to set up institutionalized mechanisms to identify and develop priority economic sectors. These efforts affect both economic and political reforms to ensure positive development outcomes. Subsidies, R&D and S&T initiatives, technical, financial and legal support should be given to priority key sectors

- Many modernization programs consist of promoting the adoption of imported technology, beyond the means and capacity of small producers. There is a need provide microcredit schemes based on the earning capacity of small producers and micro players as well as to provide support to strengthen organizing efforts of end-users to ensure scale economies. The growth of the micro, small, and medium enterprises in the era of greater trade liberalization will depend on their access to research and development (R&D) resources and activities. R&D informed by the current capacities of the domestic industry as well as concrete local conditions, needs and tastes of end-users will help promote competitiveness of MSMEs, enabling them to capture a sizeable segment of the domestic market.
- Provide funding support to Universities for technology transfer that will harness the full potential of laboratory outputs toward strengthening the manufacturing sector. Improve the quality and outreach of education at all levels with a view to building a medium to high skilled workforce that can undertake industrial upgrading, diversification and innovation;
- Promote technology innovation as a public good. Pricing and access to digital technologies must be regulated by

government to make them widely available especially for education.¹⁰⁰

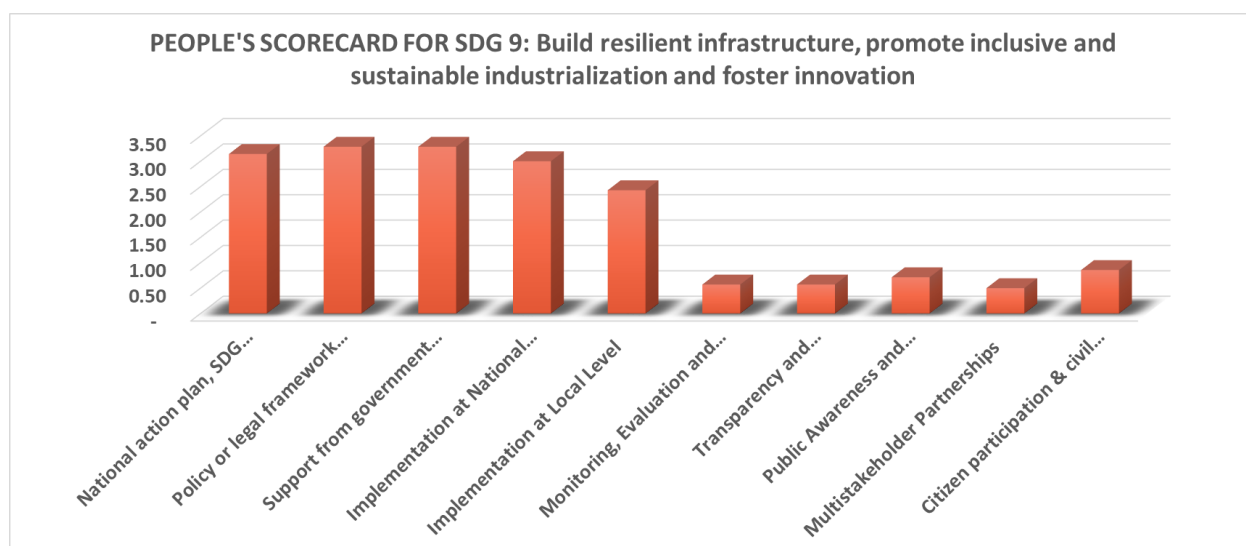
- Government partnerships with the private sector in R & D usually involve a single enterprise, which tends to slow down, if not limit technology transfer across industry. Industry associations need to be strengthened as innovation hubs.
- Base technological innovations on sound appropriate technology choices for sustainable development. Simple, modern and intermediate technologies for agricultural production and climate resiliency must be pursued in rural agricultural areas in order to protect the environment (e.g., solar powered facilities, water systems, etc.) and ensure sustainability.
- There is a need for the DBM and concerned agencies to be more transparent by providing a rundown of the relevant budget line items and the corresponding allocations in the Budget and Expenditures and Sources of Financing. This raises the question how much exactly goes to the productivity-enhancing component of the MRP that involves industrial upgrading, diversification and innovation for domestic industries? This remains unclear.
- While part of the mandate of many agencies is to support the manufacturing sector, the logical agencies for this are DTI (primarily), DA, DOE, DOLE, DOST, DOTr, DILG and DND, it is extremely curious that DSWD and DOT should be part of the convergence. This is the focus of the MRP should be on productivity enhancing activities through industrial upgrading, diversification and innovation.
- DSWD and DOT should have budgetary allocations related to the Manufacturing Revival Program

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

SDG 9 scored highest in terms of the “availability of policy and legal framework” and support from government agencies” with mean scores of 3.29. Meanwhile, multistakeholder partnerships ranked lowest with a mean score of .50



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	3.14
Policy or legal framework available	3.29
Support from government agencies	3.29
Implementation at National Level	3.00
Implementation at Local Level	2.43
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.57
Transparency and accountability	0.57
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.71
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.50
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.86

Policy

- The government embarked on the *Build, Build, Build (BBB)* program, which seeks to accelerate infrastructure spending to 7.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of President Duterte's term of office in 2022.¹⁰¹
- The Department of Trade and Industry established the Competitiveness and Innovation Group to implement the Inclusive Innovation Industrial Strategy (i 3S), which puts innovation and targeting leading and priority economic sectors as the heart of the country's new industrial policy. To achieve manufacturing resurgence and industry roadmaps, initiatives in establishing an inclusive innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in collaboration with the private sector and academe is underway. The Philippine Inclusive Filipinnovation and Entrepreneurship Roadmap has been conceived and have identified public vehicles, boat and shipbuilding and higher value agricultural crops as some of the sectors to target. These efforts should be supported by all sectors including the international trade and financial sectors.
- The transport sector is a clear priority for ODA funding to the Philippines year on year. One-fifth of total ODA disbursements from 2009 to 2018 were allocated to transportation, with funding averaging \$US166 million a year. Three-quarters of funding was from Japan. In most years, it tops the list of sectors in terms of ODA disbursements..¹⁰²
- Convergence budgeting classification was introduced in 2017. Ten (10) departments and other executive offices received allocations for the Manufacturing Resurgence/Revival Program (MRP), which is one of the many convergence programs of the government. With this, Manufacturing Revival Program (MRP) integrated in various agencies, such as the DA, DOE, DILG, DOLE, DND, DOST, DSWD, DOT, DOTr, DOT.

Situationer

- Before *Build, Build, Build (BBB)* program, greatly needed investments in infrastructure have been largely neglected since the 1980s, as the Philippines grappled with one fiscal and financial crisis after another until the late 2000s.¹⁰³
- Most infrastructure projects in recent decades were foreign assisted, emphasizing the role of ODA as a stable source of development funding for the Philippines.¹⁰⁴
- Although public-private partnerships (PPPs) play a major role in financing BBB, the program remains heavily reliant on ODA, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 29 percent of the \$86 billion cost of approved projects is planned to be funded through this scheme. ODA was slated to fund 49 percent of the total amount, while the remaining 22 percent would be funded from government coffers.¹⁰⁵
- Snags in implementation of BBB have caused the program to proceed slowly since even before the pandemic. For instance, the master list of projects had to be modified as some of the planned big projects—which eventually turned out to be infeasible—were replaced with smaller, more doable ones.¹⁰⁶ Further, in 2019 Congress set the annual budget for capital outlay (\$14.07 billion) lower than what was proposed by the executive branch (\$15.52 billion).³⁹ The low rate of disbursement of BBB funds—less than half of total obligations on average from 2017 to 2019—by the two agencies mainly responsible for the program, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Transportation (DOTr), “signals slow, inefficient project implementation.”¹⁰⁷
- Digital innovations are corporate-controlled and corporate-driven.

- It is most likely that the MRP budget is embedded across specific budget line items of the relevant agencies, but unfortunately, the details are not disclosed in the budget documents. There is no clear budget line items for the MRP budget
- The neo-liberal development framework frustrated the country's national industrialization, leaving Philippine manufacturing and agriculture sectors underdeveloped. It remains a labor exporting country unable to generate meaningful jobs. It depends on imported goods for its food security as its resources are plundered by big local and foreign corporations. Farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, urban poor communities are driven out of their sources of livelihoods and abodes to accommodate projects and businesses that discriminate against their right to development and governance.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

CSO Recommendations:

- **Industrial Policy**
 - Industrial policy should be the main development strategy to establish efficient, beneficial firms that generate positive multipliers effect throughout the economy.
 - The special and differential treatment (SDT) agreed upon in WTO and other regional trade agreements should be renegotiated given the latest economic theories that show industrial policy is a necessary, legitimate and doable goal for developing countries.
- **Innovation**
 - Even if developed countries are resistant, developing countries' governments should proceed with efforts to collaborate with private industry, academe, science and technology sector, the labor and legal sectors to set up institutionalized mechanisms to identify and develop priority economic sectors. These efforts affect both economic and political reforms to ensure positive development outcomes. Subsidies, R&D and S&T initiatives, technical, financial and legal support should be given to priority key sectors
 - Many modernization programs consist of promoting the adoption of imported technology, beyond the means and capacity of small producers. There is a need provide microcredit schemes based on the earning capacity of small producers and micro players as well as to provide support to strengthen organizing efforts of end-users to ensure scale economies.
 - "The growth of the micro, small, and medium enterprises in the era of greater trade liberalization will depend on their access to research and development (R&D) resources and activities. R&D informed by the current capacities of the domestic industry as well as concrete local conditions, needs and tastes of end-users will help promote competitiveness of MSMEs, enabling them to capture a sizeable segment of the domestic market.
 - Universities have a vast reserve of research and development outputs that have yet to be tapped for the use of domestic industries. There is need to provide funding support for technology transfer that will harness the full potential of laboratory outputs toward strengthening the manufacturing sector.
 - Promote technology innovation as a public good. Government partnerships with the private sector in R & D usually involve a single enterprise, which tends to slow down,

if not limit technology transfer across industry. Industry associations need to be strengthened as innovation hubs.

- There is a need to base technological innovations on sound appropriate technology choices for sustainable development. Simple, modern and intermediate technologies for agricultural production and climate resiliency must be pursued in rural agricultural areas in order to protect the environment (e.g., solar powered facilities, water systems, etc.) and ensure sustainability.
- Pricing and access to digital technologies must be regulated by government to make them widely available especially for education. Technology should not replace humans (AI) and must not be dehumanizing.
- Improve the quality and outreach of education at all levels with a view to building a medium to high skilled workforce that can undertake industrial upgrading, diversification and innovation;¹⁰⁸

- **Manufacturing Sector**

- While part of the mandate of many agencies is to support the manufacturing sector, the logical agencies for this are DTI (primarily), DA, DOE, DOLE , DOST, DOTr, DILG and DND, it is extremely curious that DSWD and DOT should be part of the convergence. This is the focus of the MRP should be on productivity enhancing activities through industrial upgrading, diversification and innovation. Tourism and social assistance and social protection programs are not within the main purview of the MRP.
- How does one explain the significant fluctuations in the MRP budget from P6.5 B in 2017 to P18.3 B in 2018, then a decline to 11.4 B in 2019 and to no recorded budget in 2020? This speaks to inadequate budgetary allocation with inconsistency in budget levels.
- DSWD and DOT should have budgetary allocations related to the Manufacturing Revival Program given that their institutional mandates lie elsewhere (social protection and tourism, respectively)?
- There is a need for the DBM and concerned agencies to be more transparent by providing a rundown of the relevant budget line items and the corresponding allocations in the Budget and Expenditures and Sources of Financing. It is unclear how much exactly goes to the productivity-enhancing component of the MRP that involves industrial upgrading, diversification and innovation for domestic industries.



Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Trends

- Inequality remains a major concern. Midway into Agenda 2030, so many more millions of Filipinos are left behind. Systemic issues that hinder eradication of poverty and inequality remain unaddressed. When the country's HDI is adjusted for inequality, it is only 0.587, a whopping 18.2 percent drop from its non-adjusted rating.¹⁰⁹ Taking inequality into account, the Philippines actually ranks toward the tail end of countries at the medium level of human development.¹¹⁰
- According to the Center for Women's Resources (CWR), the number of economically insecure Filipino women increased from 16 million in 2019 to an estimated 19.54 million in 2020.¹¹¹
- Since 2014, there are more women workers migrating for work than male workers. In 2018, the proportion was 55.8% women migrant workers. About 60% of them work as domestic workers. This is reinforced with the ageing of the world population creating a steady and high demand for care workers cum domestic workers.
- The push to make the country more attractive to investors and lenders was made possible largely through the reduction of social expenditures while imposing regressive taxes.¹¹²
- In the Philippines, informal employment is the norm. The share of the informally employed is estimated to be more than 80 percent of Filipino workers, of which 65 percent are in the informal sector (e.g. unincorporated or unregistered enterprises), and the rest are informally employed in the formal sector and in private households. Informal employment is characterized by very low wages, poor working conditions, and lack of social security and collective representation. Most

regular workers are paid the minimum wage, indicated by the average wage for the Philippines being very close to the minimum wage. This is also reinforced by the prevalent practice of job outsourcing.

- Francisco et al (2019), using the Frey-Osborne framework (2013), found that 67.9% of all employment in the country are in areas that are vulnerable to automation, with younger workers, lower-waged jobs, and more casual jobs being at higher risk.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- The high economic growth rates have generally benefitted those involved in the growth sectors of the economy while those de-linked from these sectors generally remain excluded from benefitting from the gains of growth and continue to languish in low-productive, low value work, especially in agriculture, industry, and a section in the services sector, thereby intensifying inequality.¹¹³
- The desire to reduce inequality is generally not matched by adequate political action. Some policy measures are seen to deepen poverty and inequality such as the imposition of a fuel tax as embedded in the recently enacted tax law pointing to policy incoherence in the fight against poverty and inequality.¹¹⁴
- Excluded and de-linked from the growth bonanza are those in the agricultural sector, especially farmers and fisherfolk who remain in hand-to-mouth existence, and comprise the poorest section of the country's labor force.¹¹⁵
- The government's problematic method of counting the poor and unemployed and data generation for identifying the vulnerable sectors left millions more of the Filipino poor and vulnerable, uncounted, further aggravating social exclusion, inequality and poverty.

- Workers' wages are low, jobs insecure and under precarious conditions; basic social services i.e., health, education, housing including adequate relief assistance remain mostly inaccessible to indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, elderly, women, children, youth, LGBTQ+, Bangsamoro, homeless and informal workers.
- Inequality worsened during the pandemic with continuing implementation of decades-old market-driven and private profit-biased neo-liberal development framework.
- The government's debt-ridden pandemic response reached Php12.8 trillion. But these were mostly for infrastructure projects under the build-build-build program largely benefitting private local and foreign corporations.
- A significant number of OFWs have been displaced during the pandemic — affecting at least 10% of the population dependent on remittances.
- Government fiscal measures to generate funds for public spending are borne by the poor through regressive tax measures while giving more incentives for the big business.
- The rich and above middle families continue to enjoy more benefits through tax free or low tax policies on their activities. The middle income families are usually mandated to contribute through taxes but doesn't enjoy much benefits. The low income families enjoy some form of benefits but it is not uniform or sustainable.
- Several studies (e.g. ILO 2016, Francisco et al. 2019) have established the vulnerability of Philippine waged workers to automation risks, with workers in call centers being replaced by AI software being the most well-known example.
- Women migrant workers are rendered more vulnerable because of the nature of their work as domestic workers and care givers whose places of work are the private households of their employers. A big push factor or driver for women out-migration is their low level of labor force participation in

the country, which plateaued at almost 50% maximum since the last few years because they were pre occupied with housework and taking care of their children.

- More than half of women migrants do not have access to social protection abroad because they are not 'eligible' and/or have no access as 'low-skilled workers' or those in elementary occupation; the same goes for 10% of male OFWs who also fall under elementary occupation category.
- Most working women are daily wage earners, and the pandemic lockdown reduced their wages below the minimum wage, reducing the capacity of working women and their families to cope with the pandemic.¹¹⁶
- In the COVID-19 pandemic national budget (2020), all regions other than the NCR and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) posted negative growth rates in allocations from the GAA (2020).
- Inequalities between persons with disabilities and those without disabilities increased due to the lack of support from policy makers and government agencies to tackle root causes of inequalities. For instance, there is no budget to cover the cost of assistive device. Also, modernization of jeepney does not include accessibility as design criteria in the modern design.

Solutions and policy recommendations

- Correctly tax those who have significantly benefited from the growth within the last decade by improving tax administration, address tax evasion and avoidance so that additional public revenues are generated; suspend regressive taxation (e.g., fuel tax) borne by the poor and low-income groups;
- Provide universal quality social services that are affordable and accessible, in particular, education, health, housing and in the provision of water and sanitation and target

hard-to-reach groups, especially those in far-flung, remote and upland areas.

- For IPs as well as for Persons with Disabilities, the elderly, children and the youth, women and other socially excluded and discriminated groups, ensure participatory approaches in the design, implementation and monitoring of programs which can enhance their well-being and productivity¹¹⁷
- Significantly increase public investments in agriculture (which includes fishing and forestry) and focus on increasing the productivity and incomes of farmers and fisherfolk.¹¹⁸
- Complete agrarian reform in Private Agricultural Lands (PAL) and significantly increase public investment in support services so that agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) can adequately earn from their newly-acquired land. This will also stem the widespread practice of ARBs re-selling their land due to lack of government support to make their lands productive.¹¹⁹
- Stop the rampant practice of agricultural land conversion to industrial, commercial and residential estates. Instead, the government should come up with a National Land Use Plan that provides a premium to ensuring the country's food security/sovereignty and consider sustainable development principles in the use of the country's land and other resources.¹²⁰
- Decisively address the lop-sided character of Agricultural Venture Agreements (AVAs) where farmers are generally disadvantaged.

To this end, government should tap an independent and competent research entity to assess DAR's AVA program and make the necessary recommendations with a view to ensuring that farmers equally benefit from any joint partnership with the private sector.

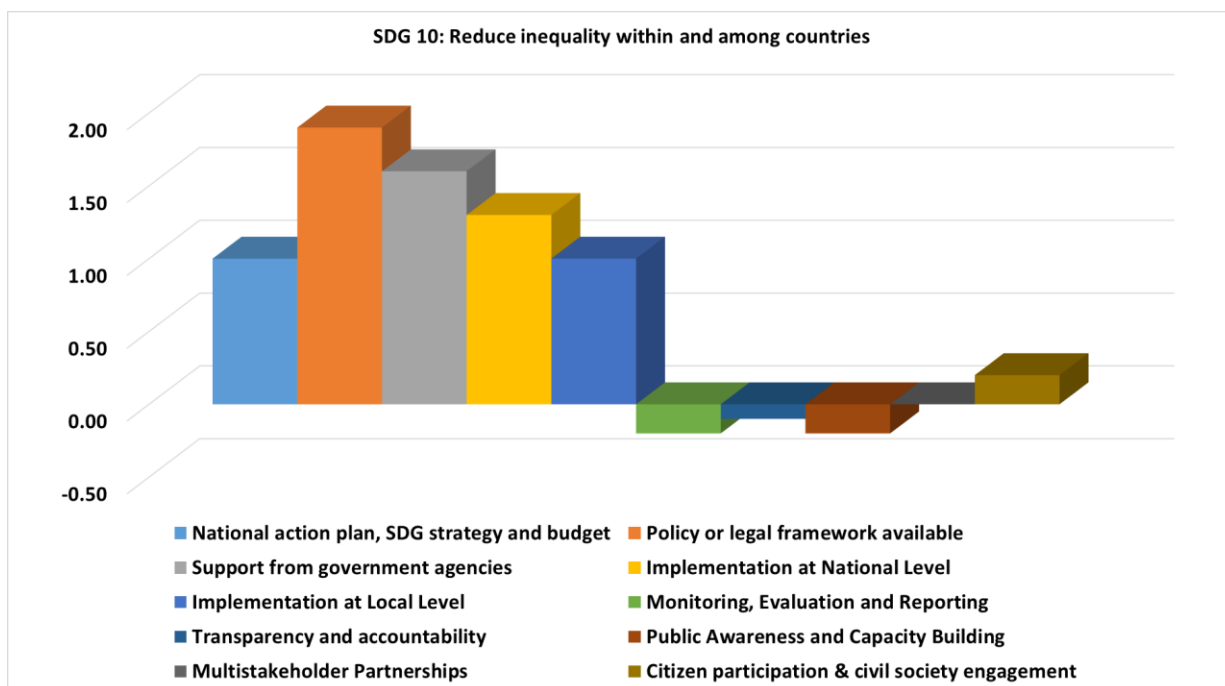
¹²¹

- The findings of Castillo and Cruz suggest that the DTI's I³S strategy needs to not only promote an innovation ecosystem, but to have industrial policy targets dedicated to the expansion of sectors where new work tasks are likely to be generated for labor vis-a-vis emerging technologies (e.g. data analytics). This is the main measure needed to ensure that the labor share of value-added and income does not deteriorate further. As with broader concerns on automation and employment displacement, the need for creating new tasks further underscores the necessity of robust skills development mechanisms, and bilateral/multilateral initiatives for supporting these
- In the short and medium term, the unilateral extension of social protection programs to all migrant workers is good. But government must continue efforts to advocate and negotiate with countries of destination so migrant workers can access social protection programs.
- Government should provide wider options for decent job opportunities for women, outside of care work; a wide array of skills options should also be made available to women workers.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 10 had the highest mean score at 1.90. Meanwhile, both “monitoring, evaluation and reporting” and “public awareness and capacity building” ranked lowest with a mean score of -0.20.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	1.90
Support from government agencies	1.60
Implementation at National Level	1.30
Implementation at Local Level	1.00
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	-0.20
Transparency and accountability	-0.10

Public Awareness and Capacity Building	-0.20
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.00
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.20

Policy

- It was only under the Duterte Administration that inequality-reducing measures were identified as a major strategic outcome or pillar in the country's five-year development plan. Along this line, strategies were outlined to expand economic opportunities in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries (AFF) sector—create more jobs and businesses in the industry and services (I&S) sector; accelerate human capital development by reducing vulnerability of individuals and families and to build safe and secure communities.¹²²
- The Philippine Development Plan 2017–2022 was anchored on the following vision statement: *By 2040, the Philippines is a prosperous middle-class society where no one is poor. People live long and healthy lives and are smart and innovative. The country is a high-trust society where families thrive in vibrant, culturally diverse, and resilient communities.*¹²³
- In the Philippines only the richest 30 percent of the population are net savers—that is, their incomes are higher than their expenditures on average—and therefore potentially can lend money to the government. The CREATE Law is expected to boost the savings of the rich even further. Its revenue-eroding measures, along with increasing debt servicing, may also lead to reduced public spending on agricultural development and social services, which have never been among the government's top priorities, to the detriment of the poor, who depend on these investments.¹²⁴
- During the pandemic, other regions received smaller shares of expenditures of the 2020 COVID-19 budget than did NCR. Although the nationwide budgets for the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), DOH, and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) increased by at least 50 percent, the budgets of DepEd, DA, and DSWD sharply declined. The nationwide budgets of DepEd, DA, and DSWD decreased by \$544 million, \$355 million, and \$133 million, respectively. Meanwhile, nationwide appropriations for DOH, DOLE, and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) increased by \$618 million, \$126 million, and \$85 million, respectively.¹²⁵
- Under Bayanihan I, the DOLE received \$100 million to assist displaced overseas Filipino workers returning to the country and \$150 million to fund financial assistance programs for workers affected by the pandemic.¹²⁶
- In the COVID-19 pandemic national budget (2020), all regions other than the NCR and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) posted negative growth rates in allocations from the GAA (2020). The increase in the nationwide and region-specific budgets of DILG, except for its central, Region IX, and Region XII offices, was offset by the contraction of DepEd allocations in all regions besides the NCR and BARMM.¹²⁷
- The enactment of RA 11510 Institutionalizing the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in Basic Education in December 2020 and RA 11650 Instituting a Policy of Inclusion and Services for Learners with Disabilities in Support of Inclusive Education in March 2022 are major milestones in reducing inequalities. RA 11510 institutionalizes a second chance for adults who did not complete their basic education so that they can get up-skilled and expand the jobs open to them.
- While the Department of Education (DepEd) at the national level has expressed its support for RA 1150 and RA 11650, the implementing rules and regulations of R 11510 still has to be

written as it awaited the establishment of the Bureau of Alternative Education within DepEd which was only completed in November 2021.

- Inequalities between persons with disabilities and those without disabilities increased due to the lack of support from policy makers and government agencies to tackle root causes of inequalities. For instance, there is no budget to cover the cost of assistive device. Also, modernization of jeepney does not include accessibility as design criteria in the modern design.

Situationer

- Policymakers, academics and even some CSO members openly worry about poverty but the problem of glaring inequalities in the country generally remains unproblematized. There is, as is often the case, a sense that for as long as poverty is reduced, ‘then there should be no principled objection to the unrestricted gains of the very rich’ (UNRISD 2010, p.59).¹²⁸
- The high economic growth rates have generally benefitted those involved in the growth sectors of the economy while those de-linked from these sectors generally remain excluded from benefitting from the gains of growth and continue to languish in low-productive, low value work, especially in agriculture, industry, and a section in the services sector, thereby intensifying inequality.¹²⁹
- While government has undertaken certain measures such as increased funding for human development with free tertiary education as a prime example, as subsequent sections will underscore, the desire to reduce inequality is generally not matched by adequate political action. More than that, other policy measures are seen to deepen poverty and inequality such as the imposition of a fuel tax as embedded in the recently enacted tax law pointing to policy incoherence in the fight against poverty and inequality.¹³⁰
- Apart from certain policy statements to undertake agrarian reform and eliminating other disparities like gender and other dimensions of inequality, addressing this issue with decisive action, including serious redistributive reforms, seems a marginal concern across the country’s medium-term development plans across the last three decades, in spite widespread evidence of dramatically unequal distribution of income and wealth.¹³¹
- Inequality remains a major concern. Midway into Agenda 2030, so many more millions of Filipinos are left behind. Systemic issues that hinder eradication of poverty and inequality remain unaddressed.
- When the country’s HDI is adjusted for inequality, it is only 0.587, a whopping 18.2 percent drop from its non-adjusted rating.¹³² Taking inequality into account, the Philippines actually ranks toward the tail end of countries at the medium level of human development. Among Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia and Vietnam have comparable levels of IHDI to the Philippines. Interestingly, the country’s IHDI is the same as the global average.¹³³
- Implementation of policies to end inequality is not sustained or not as aggressive as expected.
- **Vulnerable Sectors**
 - Excluded and de-linked from the growth bonanza are those in the agricultural sector, especially farmers and fisherfolk who remain in hand-to-mouth existence, and comprise the poorest section of the country’s labor force.¹³⁴
 - The government’s problematic method of counting the poor and unemployed and data generation for identifying the vulnerable sectors left millions more of the Filipino poor and vulnerable, uncounted, further aggravating social exclusion, inequality and poverty. Hence, workers’ wages are low, jobs insecure and under precarious conditions; basic social services i.e., health, education, housing including adequate relief assistance remain mostly

- inaccessible to indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, elderly, women, children, youth, LGBTQ+, Bangsamoro, homeless and informal workers.
- According to the Center for Women's Resources (CWR), the number of economically insecure Filipino women increased from 16 million in 2019 to an estimated 19.54 million in 2020.¹³⁵ Most working women are daily wage earners, and the pandemic lockdown reduced their wages below the minimum wage, reducing the capacity of working women and their families to cope with the pandemic.¹³⁶
 - With DepEd itself slow to implement RA 11510, the creation of community learning centers to house ALS classes has not began. There is a need to intensify campaigns to increase public awareness on the need for adult learning and education in order to pressure local governments to prioritize it.
 - **COVID-19 Impact**
 - Inequality worsened during the pandemic with continuing implementation of decades-old market-driven and private profit-biased neo-liberal development framework.
 - The government's debt-ridden pandemic response reached Php12.8 trillion. But these were mostly for infrastructure projects under the build-build-build program largely benefitting private local and foreign corporations.
 - The sectors most affected by the pandemic were the indigenous peoples, peasants, farmers, fisherfolks, women, elderly, persons with disabilities, children, informal workers
 - A significant number of OFWs have been displaced during the pandemic — affecting at least 10% of the population dependent on remittances; an economy propped by these remittances as it fueled our consumption driven economy—raises questions about the sustainability, much less the desirability, of this type of development
 - **Taxation**
 - The push to make the country more attractive to investors and lenders was made possible largely through the reduction of social expenditures while imposing regressive taxes.¹³⁷
 - Government fiscal measures to generate funds for public spending are borne by the poor through regressive tax measures while giving more incentives for the big business.
 - The rich and above middle families continue to enjoy more benefits through tax free or low tax policies on their activities. The middle income families are usually mandated to contribute through taxes but doesn't enjoy much benefits. The low income families enjoy some form of benefits but it is not uniform or sustainable.
 - The low interest, low inflation regime so jealously guarded by the country's economic technocrats came at the cost of austerity and additional taxes.¹³⁸
 - **Wages**
 - In the Philippines, informal employment is the norm. The share of the informally employed is estimated to be more than 80 percent of Filipino workers, of which 65 percent are in the informal sector (e.g. unincorporated or unregistered enterprises), and the rest are informally employed in the formal sector and in private households. Informal employment is characterized by very low wages, poor working conditions, and lack of social security and collective representation.
 - There is surge in economic growth in some countries but huge social and economic imbalances globally, regionally and nationally. Wage workers have been squeezed by the Race to the Bottom promoted by the MNCs, who take advantage of “borderless” markets in search of cheap, malleable and non-unionized work force and investment areas hospitable to these corporate behemoths

- The resulting squeeze on labor rights and wages have deepened social and economic inequality, weakened unionism and bargaining rights of workers in many countries of Asia
- The all for skills upgrading has become pointless given the lack of balance in the supply and demand in a globalized economy, for example, parts of the GVCs for certain industries can be disrupted or relocated anytime;
- Labor precarity affects majority of the workers in both the formal and informal sectors
- Most regular workers are paid the minimum wage, indicated by the average wage for the Philippines being very close to the minimum wage. This is also reinforced by the prevalent practice of job outsourcing.
- **Technological change, labor share, and inequality**
 - Several studies (e.g. ILO 2016, Francisco et al. 2019) have established the vulnerability of Philippine waged workers to automation risks, with workers in call centers being replaced by AI software being the most well-known example. Francisco et al (2019), using the Frey-Osborne framework (2013), found that 67.9% of all employment in the country are in areas that are vulnerable to automation, with younger workers, lower-waged jobs, and more casual jobs being at higher risk.
 - Using the Autor-Salomons Framework (2018), Castillo and Cruz (forthcoming) have generated preliminary evidence that general patterns of technological change and innovation among Philippine firms in recent years have served to displace the labor share of value-added (and thus income) in favor of capital. This mirrors research at the global level by Autor and Salomons (2018) that automation, even when not labor-displacing, may have significant inequality effects through its impacts on the labor share of national income. Especially since the 2000s, this trend has become especially pronounced among OECD countries.
- **Women Migrant Workers**
 - Feminization of labor migration -- Since 2014, there are more women workers migrating for work than male workers. In 2018, the proportion was 55.8% women migrant workers. About 60% of them work as domestic workers. This is reinforced with the ageing of the world population creating a steady and high demand for care workers cum domestic workers.
 - Women migrant workers are rendered more vulnerable because of the nature of their work as domestic workers and care givers whose places of work are the private households of their employers. A big push factor or driver for women out-migration is their low level of labor force participation in the country, which plateaued at almost 50% maximum since the last few years because they were pre occupied with housework and taking care of their children.
 - "More than half of women migrants do not have access to social protection abroad because they are not 'eligible' and/or have no access as 'low-skilled workers' or those in elementary occupation; the same goes for 10% of male OFWs who also fall under elementary occupation category.
 - As workers in the elementary occupation, they are low waged and without social protection. They will keep working abroad for as long as they can until they can no longer put off their eventual return to the country.
 - As regards women migrants, 67% of them between the age of 25-39 years old continue to work overseas. They come back home for good earlier than their male counterparts, with a significant number coming home distressed and unable to complete their contracts.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- Funds for the establishment of Alternative Learning Centers were included in the 2022 national budget only because of the strong pressure exerted by CSO groups. Local governments must now be convinced to look for land on which such centers can be built or for structures that can be converted for use as community learning centers.
- **CSO Recommendations:**
 - **Systemic Challenges**
 - In the near term, the priority should be on rehabilitating the economy by building the capacity of business enterprises and retooling and retraining the labor sector. After revitalizing the economy, the government should refocus its attention and continue its reforms to taxation and revenue administration to ensure that it has enough resources to sustain its development efforts. Emphasis should be given to progressive tax policies rather than regressive and less transparent indirect taxes, as inequality remains a major hindrance to achieving inclusive development and poverty alleviation. Donor countries and institutions should support these interventions to allow the Philippines to become once again an able partner in pursuing global prosperity.¹³⁹
 - Systemic issues and challenges not addressed with continuing implementation of decades-old market-driven and private profit-biased neo-liberal development framework hindering the eradication of poverty, discrimination, and inequality. There is a need to strengthen/adopt a people-centered, human rights based development framework.
 - The health crisis and economic crisis resulting from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic laid bare systemic challenges that have plagued our economic, social and environmental systems across generations. It has deepened poverty, discrimination, and inequality. We know that while almost all have been negatively impacted, there are vulnerable groups disproportionately affected—persons with disabilities, the elderly, children, women, LGBTQ+, indigenous peoples, youth, farmers and fisherfolk, urban poor, Bangsamoro people.
 - Correctly tax those who have significantly benefited from the growth within the last decade by improving tax administration, address tax evasion and avoidance so that additional public revenues are generated; suspend regressive taxation (e.g., fuel tax) borne by the poor and low-income groups;
 - **Social Service for Vulnerable Sectors**
 - Provide universal quality social services that are affordable and accessible, in particular, education, health, housing and in the provision of water and sanitation and target hard-to-reach groups, especially those in far-flung, remote and upland areas.
 - For indigenous peoples, Muslims and other diverse groups, employ culturally appropriate development approaches in the provision of their needs.¹⁴⁰
 - For IPs as well as for Persons with Disabilities, the elderly, children and the youth, women and other socially excluded and discriminated groups, ensure participatory approaches in the design, implementation and monitoring of programs which can enhance their well-being and productivity¹⁴¹
 - Re-orient social protection from its residual policy framework and link it to a broader developmental agenda that is transformative and which upholds universal social policy.

In this light, promote the progressive version of the universal social protection floor and work closely with various citizens' movements in the country and abroad, government agencies, and the International Labor Organization (ILO); ¹⁴²

○ **Agriculture**

- Significantly increase public investments in agriculture (which includes fishing and forestry) and focus on increasing the productivity and incomes of farmers and fisherfolk. ¹⁴³
- Complete agrarian reform in Private Agricultural Lands (PAL) and significantly increase public investment in support services so that agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) can adequately earn from their newly-acquired land. This will also stem the widespread practice of ARBs re-selling their land due to lack of government support to make their lands productive. ¹⁴⁴
- Stop the rampant practice of agricultural land conversion to industrial, commercial and residential estates. Instead, the government should come up with a National Land Use Plan that provides a premium to ensuring the country's food security/sovereignty and consider sustainable development principles in the use of the country's land and other resources. ¹⁴⁵
- Decisively address the lop-sided character of Agricultural Venture Agreements (AVAs) where farmers are generally disadvantaged. To this end, government should tap an independent and competent research entity to assess DAR's AVA program and make the necessary recommendations with a view to ensuring that farmers equally benefit from any joint partnership with the private sector. ¹⁴⁶

○ **Labour policies**

- Review the wide coverage of exemptions from minimum wage legislations;
- Pursue strategies that would facilitate the transition from informal employment to formal employment – e.g. (b.1) strengthen the enforcement of Domestic Workers Act enacted in 2013 which provide protection to domestic workers against low wages; very long work hours, abuse and slavery; (b.2) review the bills on the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy and advocate for its enactment into law.
- Strengthen partnerships between CSOs and concerned government agencies (DSWD, DTI, DILG, DOST, TESDA, etc.) to organize informal worker into viable and more productive cooperatives or enterprises.
- Strengthen and capacitate trade unions and labor groups to engage in industry-level collective bargaining. If wages are set through a collective bargaining agreement at the industry level – e.g. janitorial services industry; nursing industry; security personnel industry, then this would minimize any abusive use of market power by employers to reduce wages towards poverty levels.
- There needs to be a stronger policy thrust on social protection and unemployment insurance, given the pervasive character of automation risks
- The Philippine government and UNCTAD to champion the adoption of international social protection floors as a necessary remedial measure for mitigating the risks of employment displacement. Like the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, UNCTAD deliberations should reflect commitments for a 'global compact' on enhancing social protection initiatives worldwide, which may include the provision of universal basic income measures (3) The Philippine government has made major strides towards promoting skills development and as well as establishing a government-business-

academe innovation ecosystem, but the quality of such efforts needs to be further enhanced, especially at the local government level. UNCTAD could encourage such efforts by endorsing and supporting bilateral and multilateral efforts to improve skills development mechanisms in developing countries.

○ **Innovation / technologies**

- The findings of Castillo and Cruz suggest that the DTI's I³S strategy needs to not only promote an innovation ecosystem, but to have industrial policy targets dedicated to the expansion of sectors where new work tasks are likely to be generated for labor vis-a-vis emerging technologies (e.g. data analytics). This is the main measure needed to ensure that the labor share of value-added and income does not deteriorate further.
- As with broader concerns on automation and employment displacement, the need for creating new tasks further underscores the necessity of robust skills development mechanisms, and bilateral/multilateral initiatives for supporting these

○ **Women Workers**

- Government should provide wider options for decent job opportunities for women, outside of care work; a wide array of skills options should also be made available to women workers
- We must change the narrative of women's work, whether in the country or overseas, so there is proper valuation and recognition of women's work. Changing the narrative of women in the world of work includes embracing their being women with sexual and reproductive health rights as different from male workers.
- Women workers' voices, participation and agency must be promoted and respected especially in crafting policies that impact on them; They must not be seen as mere recipients of government programs and services but as critical stakeholder in migration governance.

○ **Migrant Workers**

- Government should prioritize creation of decent job opportunities in the country for male, female and young workers. This is the only way that labor migration will be one of free choice and not out of compulsion so that our migrant workers are not put in harms' way.
- In the short and medium term, the unilateral extension of social protection programs to all migrant workers is good. But government must continue efforts to advocate and negotiate with countries of destination so migrant workers can access social protection programs.
- Where migrant workers are already included, for Philippine government to facilitate portability and totalization of social security contributions through the forging of social security agreements (SSAs)



Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Trends

- The conversation around sustainable cities and communities has revolved mainly around climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction and mitigation.
- Cities are the most well-resourced amongst LGUs. They are also the most densely populated areas and where the problems of housing, transport are most felt.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- Philippine cities lack parks and open spaces for children to play and young people to congregate in safety. There is a need to include development planning to ensure that cities and communities are child- and family-friendly
- As evidenced by the struggle of commuters and pedestrians daily, what the transportation sector has invested so far are big ticket car-centric projects than projects that move people.

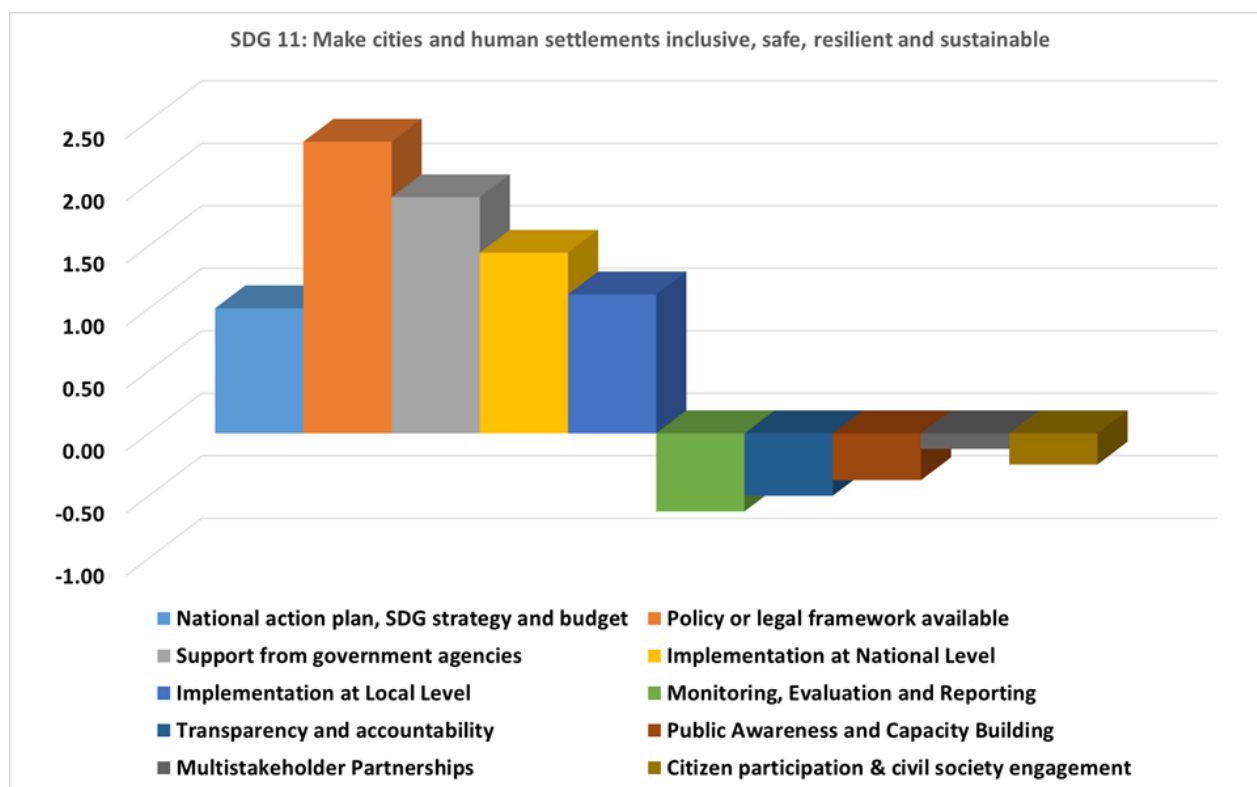
Solutions and policy recommendations

- There is a need to focus on the needs of the working class in city planning. This includes efficient public transportation system, decent living standards including affordable energy, clean water and sanitation, and a disaster risk reduction and mitigation plans.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

SDG 11 scored highest in terms of the “availability of policy and legal framework” with mean scores of 2.33. Meanwhile, “monitoring, evaluation and reporting” ranked lowest with a mean score of -0.63.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	2.33
Support from government agencies	1.89
Implementation at National Level	1.44
Implementation at Local Level	1.11

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	-0.63
Transparency and accountability	-0.50
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	-0.38
Multistakeholder Partnerships	-0.13
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	-0.25

Policy

- There is a need to focus on the needs of the working class in city planning. This includes efficient public transportation system, decent living standards including affordable energy, clean water and sanitation, and a disaster risk reduction and mitigation plans.

Situationer

- The conversation around sustainable cities and communities has revolved mainly around climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction and mitigation.
- Philippine cities lack parks and open spaces for children to play and young people to congregate in safety. There is a need to include development planning to ensure that cities and communities are child- and family-friendly.
- Cities are the most well-resourced amongst LGUs. They are also the most densely populated areas and where the problems of housing, transport are most felt.
- As evidenced by the struggle of commuters and pedestrians daily, what the transportation sector has invested so far are big ticket car-centric projects than projects that move people.



Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Trends

- Public investment on sectors like agriculture remain to be low and dependent on foreign capital. There is also a question on who benefits from the policies because small, medium, and micro businesses are struggling in accessing capital or any form of government assistance or benefits.
- There is an *Organic Agriculture Act*, but there is promotion of genetic modification (e.g. Golden Rice and BT *Talong*).
- The country is reliant on extractive industries, as evidenced by the non-passage of the Alternative Mining and Resource Bill. However, advocacies are gaining ground with the recent renewal of South Cotabato's commitment against Open Pit Mining and the resolution of the Marcopper case.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- Around 33% drop in prices and farmers' income meant taking away Php19 billion from the pockets of small farmers at annual palay production of 19 million tons. The estimated total losses of farmers for 2019 alone could reach Php 140 billion, or Php 30,000 per hectare. This is more than 10 times the damage wrought by Typhoon Yolanda to the agriculture sector in 2013.
- The levies and funds have not been put to good use to improve rice production productivity. Credits are disbursed by Land Bank to entities not certified to put the money to proper use. Credit facilities are not accessible to small producers.
- From the manifesto of farmers and food sovereignty advocates: "The law not only "tariffed" rice at a rate that unfairly caused huge losses in farmers' incomes. It also unilaterally liberalized the rice industry by

removing almost all major government controls over rice imports and domestic trade. Since January 2019, over 3 million tons of recorded imported rice entered the country, most of them following the enactment of the **RLL**. This is more than double the import requirements of the country and has made the Philippines the world's top rice importer this year."

- Organic agriculture is being promoted alongside with chemical farming or the conventional farming. This is clearly a progress and a regression at the same time.
- Smallholder farmer are unable to have direct access to markets because traders who are able to provide capital/production inputs have control over their outputs and are the ones capturing the price differential between the farmgate and the retail market. There is little, if any value adding activity that takes place in farming communities.
- Coconut farmers are still stuck on copra production that is subject to price volatilities when there are a lot of other higher value adding activities that can be made out of coconut.
- The recent passage of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) has created a humongous transitional problem that must be managed. Imports have shot up to unprecedented levels which is being blamed for the steep decline in palay prices at the farmgate. Harvest fresh palay fetches a very low buying price because it has yet to be dried. Frequent rains and the lack of drying facilities at the farm are also major reason for the very low prices of palay.
- Quarantine measures on travel and social distancing disrupted the food supply chain, especially in the early months of the pandemic, and some challenges have lingered. The resulting closures of agribusiness establishments have hampered the ability of farmers and fisherfolk to secure inputs. Stoppages in the operation of banks and creditors have affected the financing of agricultural production. Other workers across the food supply chain have had

difficulties reporting for work because of the lack of public transportation. Though considered essential, some food businesses remain closed owing to anticipated weak sales and safety concerns.

- Public health safety measures “have severely affected livelihoods and the ability of households to purchase food.”¹⁴⁷ This has been exacerbated by production shocks such as the onset of African swine fever, avian influenza, fall armyworm, and adverse climate events, which significantly affected the availability and prices of pork, poultry, cereals, and other food commodities in the market. These short-term shocks have added to the list of perennial problems in the Philippine agricultural sector, which include weak growth of agricultural output, low income of producers, declining labor supply, a deteriorating resource base, lack of inputs and finance, especially for small farmers and fisherfolk, poor logistics infrastructure, a disconnect between small farmers and fisherfolk and the value chain, the high cost of nutritious food, and dependence on concentrated distribution points located in urban areas.¹⁴⁸
- The recent emphasis on excise taxes, including on petroleum products and sweetened beverages, has exacerbated inflation while decreasing the transparency of taxation through fiscal illusion. Fiscal illusion refers to the tendency of taxpayers to systematically misperceive their tax burdens when taxes are included in the cost of goods, and taxpayers may not know what portion of the price the tax constitutes or even that they are being taxed at all.”¹⁴⁹

Solutions and policy recommendations

- The Department of Agriculture needs to provide support to sustainable agriculture programs such as organic rice/food production. Its food security concept is still anchored on food availability and mostly achieved through importation. Imports of

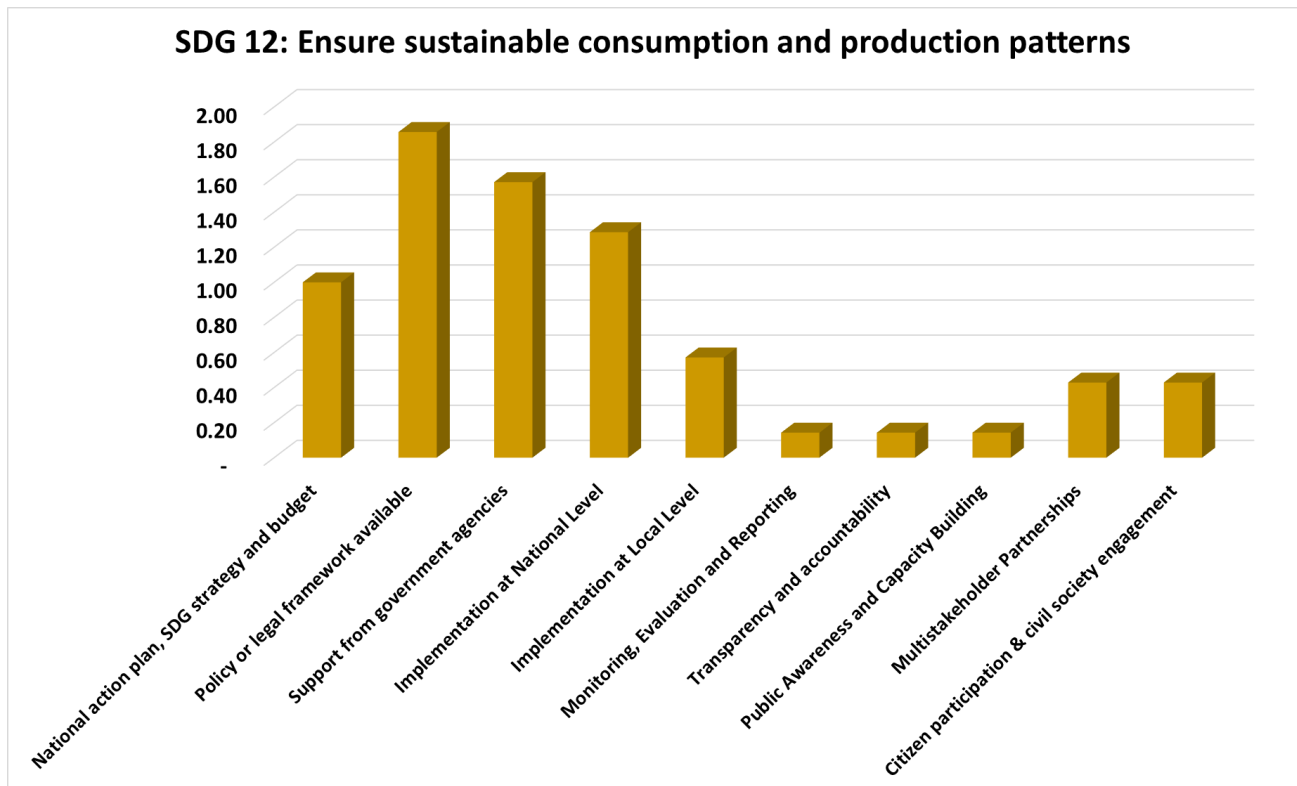
food must be consistent with making the domestic agricultural sector competitive. This means industrial policy in agriculture -- make it productive to benefit farmers. Farmers must also be organized into functioning cooperatives that will go into direct marketing, value adding activities and enterprise development at the farm level. Cash transfers, farm machineries and inputs provided by the state must be conditioned on their ability to organize themselves and take advantage of productivity enhancing research and technologies

- There is a need to be transparent in the Agricultural Roadmap. With the abolition of NFA’s monitoring role, there is no safeguards against fighting monopoly trader-lenders that abuse the law.
- Farmers registration system should ensure equal treatment of male and female farmers, adopting the definition of the small farmers in accordance with the Magna Carta of Women..
- The Philippine Competition Commission and the DTI must go after colluding traders who are hoarding rice at their warehouses to keep rice prices up.
- Serious thought must be made in amending the NFA charter. Recognize the importance of the state's role in making the rice industry competitive and protecting farmers' livelihoods.
- The devolution of agriculture support and extension services would work better if there is a clear development plan laid down from above guided by a comprehensive land and water use policy. The Mandanas Decision may be an opportunity for LGUs, which NGOs and POs must prepare for.
- The removal of quantitative restrictions and the shift to tariffs is a rational policy that makes the protection transparent. Further, revenues derived from the tariffs imposed on rice imports can be used to fund productivity enhancement programs like farm machineries, high quality seeds and farmers' training.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of “policy and legal framework” and “national action plan, SDG strategy and budget” for SDG 12 had the highest mean score at 1.86. Meanwhile, “monitoring, evaluation and reporting”, “transparency and accountability”, and “public awareness and capacity building” all garnered a mean score of .14.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	1.86
Support from government agencies	1.57
Implementation at National Level	1.29
Implementation at Local Level	0.57

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.14
Transparency and accountability	0.14
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.14
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.43
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.43

Policy

- Public investment on sectors like agriculture remain to be low and dependent on foreign capital. There is also a question on who benefits from the policies because small, medium, and micro businesses are struggling in accessing capital or any form of government assistance or benefits.
- From the manifesto of farmers and food sovereignty advocates: "The law not only “tariffed” rice at a rate that unfairly caused huge losses in farmers’ incomes. It also unilaterally liberalized the rice industry by removing almost all major government controls over rice imports and domestic trade. Since January 2019, over 3 million tons of recorded imported rice entered the country, most of them following the enactment of the RLL. This is more than double the import requirements of the country and has made the Philippines the world’s top rice importer this year."
- The RTL has reduced the NFA's function to domestic procurement and buffer stocking. But even prior to the RTL, its procuring capacity has been encumbered by lack of funds allocated for *palay* purchases at the farmgate. This is not sufficient to influence prices and break cartels at the farmgate especially in the light of the entry of more imported rice. NFA is likewise hobbled not just with trust issues (farmers think they end up buying from traders anyway), but with it being a GOCC, it has its own charter which mandates it to earn its keep while trying to serve farmers. This has placed NFA in a straight jacket
- The RTL is not without safeguards. Embedded in the law is the special and general safeguards measure which would allow the government to adjust tariffs to protect farmers should imports go haywire. The Agriculture Secretary can, *mutuo proprio* invoke the special safeguards measure to raise tariffs up to 1/3 of the existing tariff rates.
- Localized implementation of policies to promote responsible consumption and production is uneven or non-existent.
- There is an *Organic Agriculture Act*, but there is the promotion of the genetically modified (GM) technology through Golden Rice and BT *Talong*.
- The country is reliant on extractive industries, as evidenced by the non-passage of the Alternative Mining and Resource Bill. However, advocacies are gaining ground with the recent renewal of South Cotabato’s commitment against Open Pit Mining and the resolution in the Marcopper case in Marinduque.
- The Department of Agriculture needs to provide support to sustainable agriculture programs such as organic rice/food production. Its food security concept is still anchored on food availability and mostly achieved through importation. Farmers are locked in the old farming systems where technologies are not maximized to reduce their vulnerabilities to climate change impacts; marketing and transport of their produce are controlled by traders; credit facilities are not accessible to small producers. COVID 19 lockdowns showed this vicious cycle, causing more poverty amongst the poorest, also affecting SDG2 and SDG3.
- The enactment of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law came 20 years after the last comprehensive tax reform program was ratified in 1997. The new revenue law updated income tax rates, broadened the tax base, simplified the computation and

administration of several taxes, and indexed consumption tax rates to inflation. Several critics pointed out, however, that the tax reform package led to a steeper rise in commodity prices, likely making it more difficult for the poor to improve their quality of life.¹⁵⁰

- The government is promoting sustainable consumption and production by discouraging the use of plastics and encouraging reusable and recyclable bags for consumers, especially in urban areas.

Situationer

- Quarantine measures on travel and social distancing disrupted the food supply chain, especially in the early months of the pandemic, and some challenges have lingered. The resulting closures of agribusiness establishments have hampered the ability of farmers and fisherfolk to secure inputs. Stoppages in the operation of banks and creditors have affected the financing of agricultural production. Other workers across the food supply chain have had difficulties reporting for work because of the lack of public transportation. Though considered essential, some food businesses remain closed owing to anticipated weak sales and safety concerns. Public health safety measures “have severely affected livelihoods and the ability of households to purchase food.”¹⁵¹ This has been exacerbated by production shocks such as the onset of African swine fever, avian influenza, fall armyworm, and adverse climate events, which significantly affected the availability and prices of pork, poultry, cereals, and other food commodities in the market. These short-term shocks have added to the list of perennial problems in the Philippine agricultural sector, which include weak growth of agricultural output, low income of producers, declining labor supply, a deteriorating resource base, lack of inputs and finance, especially for small farmers and fisherfolk, poor logistics infrastructure, a disconnect between small farmers and fisherfolk and the value chain, the high cost of nutritious food, and dependence on concentrated distribution points located in urban areas.¹⁵²
- The recent emphasis on excise taxes, including on petroleum products and sweetened beverages, has exacerbated inflation while decreasing the transparency of taxation through fiscal illusion. Fiscal illusion refers to the tendency of taxpayers to systematically misperceive their tax burdens when taxes “are included in the cost of goods, and taxpayers may not know what portion of the price the tax constitutes or even that they are being taxed at all.”¹⁵³
- It is unclear how the government is promoting sustainable consumption and production, except perhaps for discouraging the use of plastics and encouraging reusable and recyclable bags for consumers, especially in urban areas.
- Organic agriculture is being promoted alongside with chemical farming or the conventional farming. This is clearly a progress and a regression at the same time.
- Smallholder farmer are unable to have direct access to markets because (1) traders who are able to provide capital/production inputs have control over their outputs and are the ones capturing the price differential between the farmgate and the retail market; and (2) there is little, if any value adding activity that takes place in farming communities.
- Coconut farmers are still stuck on copra production that is subject to price volatilities when there are a lot of other higher value adding activities that can be made out of coconut.
- The recent passage of the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) has created a humongous transitional problem that must be managed. Imports have shot up to unprecedented levels which is being blamed for the steep decline in palay prices at the farmgate. Harvest fresh palay fetches a very low buying price because it has yet to be dried. Frequent rains and the lack of drying facilities at the farm are also major reason for the very low prices of palay.

- Data shows around 33% drop in prices and farmers' income, which in effect has meant taking away Php 19 billion from the pockets of small farmers at annual palay production at 19 million tons. The farmers estimated total losses of farmers for 2019 alone could reach Php 140 billion, or Php 30,000 per hectare. This is more than 10 times the damage wrought by Typhoon Yolanda to the agriculture sector in 2013, and it is all man-made.
- The levies and funds have so far not been put to good use to improve rice production productivity. Only credits are disbursed by Land Bank to entities not certified to put the money to proper use. Implementation lags behind the plan. There is a need to be transparent in the Agricultural Roadmap. With the abolition of NFA's monitoring role, there is no safeguards against fighting monopoly trader-lenders that abuse the law.
- Credit facilities are not accessible to small producers.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- For advocates, GM technology as a part of the larger biotechnology is not sustainable. CSOs and international scientists presented evidences on dangers and harm of genetically modified products. They advocate for precautionary measures as debates about the technology is still ongoing and consequences are yet unknown.
- There are varying CSO positions on the RTL, particularly to either repeal, amend or suspend.
- Given the current impact of massive rice importation, there is demand among rice farmers to be adequately compensated for their actual and projected losses over successive cropping seasons, and be given subsidies to help them cope with higher prices of fertilizers and other farm inputs and services.¹⁵⁴
- **CSO Recommendations:**
 - Imports of food must be consistent with making the domestic agricultural sector competitive. This means industrial policy in agriculture --make it productive to benefit farmers
 - Farmers must be organized into functioning cooperatives that will go into direct marketing, value adding activities and enterprise development at the farm level.
 - Farmers registration system should ensure equal treatment of male and female farmers, adopting the definition of the small farmers in accordance with the Magna Carta of Women. Cash transfers, farm machineries and inputs provided by the state must be conditioned on their ability to organize themselves and take advantage of productivity enhancing research and technologies.
 - The Philippine Competition Commission and the DTI must go after colluding traders who are hoarding rice at their warehouses to keep rice prices up.
 - Serious thought must be made in amending the NFA charter given the new rules but nonetheless recognize the importance of the state's role in making the rice industry competitive and protecting farmers' livelihoods.
 - The devolution of agriculture support and extension services would work better if there is a clear development plan laid down from above guided by a comprehensive land and water use policy. The Mandanas Decision may be an opportunity for LGUs, which NGOs and POs must prepare for.
 - The removal of quantitative restrictions and the shift to tariffs is a rational policy that makes the protection transparent. Further, revenues derived from the tariffs imposed on rice imports can be used to fund productivity enhancement programs like farm machineries,

high quality seeds and farmers' training. But the question as to the correct level of tariff imposition remains.



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Trends

- Disasters lead to spikes in funding for emergency response and for reconstruction, relief, and rehabilitation. With Typhoon Haiyan hitting the Philippines in 2013, emergency response was the top ODA priority that year, accounting for 17 percent of ODA (\$125 million). The sector received almost a quarter of ODA disbursements in 2014, while support for emergency response continued, accounting for 12 percent (\$131 million) of ODA. Support for reconstruction, relief, and rehabilitation continued until 2015, when it still received significant ODA funding (\$214 million).¹⁵⁵
- The Philippines experienced record-breaking drought due to greenhouse gas emissions, massive flooding due to deforestation, dying aquatic species and water systems due to plastic pollution.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- The Government has not actively shifted policy and implementation to the use of more renewable energy sources and sustainable agriculture practices. There are no clear national commitments to cut CO₂ missions and move towards a just transition of energy. The Philippine Government's insistence on continuing with coal-fired power plants (CFPPs) and the proposed nuclear energy demonstrates half-heartedness towards contribution to solutions against climate change.

- Climate change impacts occur on top of and exacerbate many other external stresses on the coastal ecosystems already beleaguered by the above mentioned problems. It raises alarm over the vulnerability of coastal areas, fishers' communities and the fisheries sector to climate change. The 2020 scenario leading to further rise in sea level, further increased warming of sea surface temperature and more extreme weather events can greatly damage coastal ecosystems and displacement of fishing communities
- Farmers are locked in the old farming systems where technologies are not maximized to reduce their vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

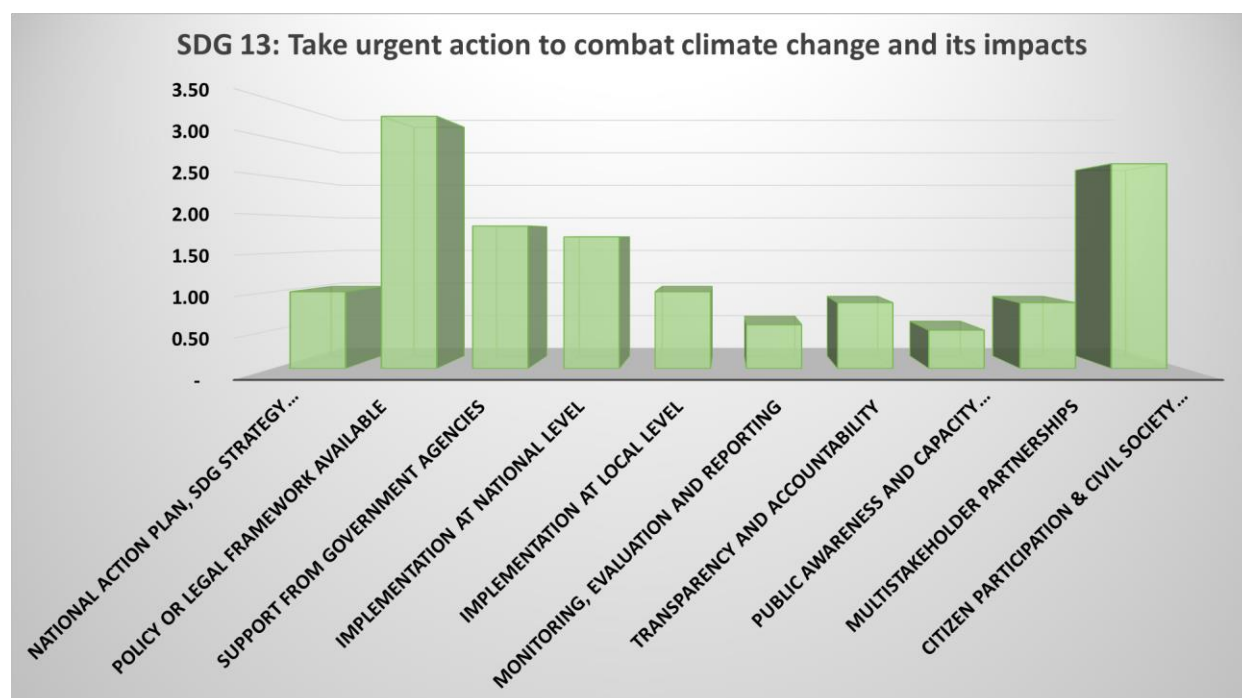
Solutions and policy recommendations

- Promote renewable energy, invest in climate proofing activities, regenerate and nurture our environment. Now is the time to place front and center the issue of consumption and production patterns, not just within our country but really acknowledging the North-South divide on this question.
- Local Government Units are in need of capacity building on adaptation to climate change to ensure that local development plans are climate-proofed from production to consumption, are well-resourced and protects women, children, PWDs and the most vulnerable from extreme weather events and disasters.
- Push for the passage of Green Jobs Act,
- Priority should be given to vulnerability assessments, adaptation and mitigation financing and support to coastal communities to combat the impact of climate change.
- Implement the recommendations of the CHR National Inquiry on Climate Change.



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of policy and legal framework for SDG 13 had the highest mean score at 3.29, while initiatives on public awareness and capacity building ranked lowest with a mean score of 0.50.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	3.29
Support from government agencies	1.86
Implementation at National Level	1.71
Implementation at Local Level	1.00
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.57
Transparency and accountability	0.86

Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.50
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.86
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	2.67

Policy

- The Government has not actively shifted policy and implementation to the use of more renewable energy sources and sustainable agriculture practices.
- There are no clear national commitments to cut CO2 missions and move towards a just transition of energy. While we may say otherwise during the Conference of Parties, the Philippine Government's insistence on continuing with coal-fired power plants (CFPPs) and the proposed nuclear energy demonstrates half-heartedness towards contribution to solutions against climate change.

Situationer

- Disasters lead to spikes in funding for emergency response and for reconstruction, relief, and rehabilitation. With Typhoon Haiyan hitting the Philippines in 2013, emergency response was the top ODA priority that year, accounting for 17 percent of ODA (\$125 million). The following year, reconstruction, relief, and rehabilitation were the focus. The sector received almost a quarter of ODA disbursements (\$257 million) in 2014, while support for emergency response continued, accounting for 12 percent (\$131 million) of ODA. Support for reconstruction, relief, and rehabilitation continued until 2015, when it still received significant ODA funding (\$214 million).¹⁵⁶
- Local Government Units are in need of capacity building on adaptation to climate change to ensure that local development plans are climate-proofed from production to consumption, are well-resourced and protects women, children, PWDs and the most vulnerable from extreme weather events and disasters.
- The Philippines experienced record-breaking drought due to greenhouse gas emissions, massive flooding due to deforestation, dying aquatic species and water systems due to plastic pollution.
- The pandemic has disastrous impact on society; there are similar catastrophes that are currently building up on the environment, including the climate front. There is a need to promote renewable energy, invest in climate proofing activities, regenerate and nurture our environment. Now is the time to place front and center the issue of consumption and production patterns, not just within our country but really acknowledging the North-South divide on this question.
- Climate change impacts occur on top of and exacerbate many other external stresses on the coastal ecosystems already beleaguered by the above mentioned problems. It raises alarm over the vulnerability of coastal areas, fishers' communities and the fisheries sector to climate change. The 2020 scenario leading to further rise in sea level, further increased warming of sea surface temperature and more extreme weather events can greatly damage coastal ecosystems and displacement of fishing communities
- Farmers are locked in the old farming systems where technologies are not maximized to reduce their vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- Climate action and climate justice are strongly being pursued through advocacy actions of CSOs and their organized communities, yet the government has not actively shifted policy and implementation to the use of more renewable energy sources and sustainable agriculture practices. Adaptation to climate change requires capacity-building at the level of LGUs to ensure that local development plans are climate-proofed from production to consumption, are well-resourced and protects women, children, PWDs and the most vulnerable from extreme weather events and disasters.
- SWP WASH Cluster pushed for the passage of Green Jobs Act.
- Priority should be given to vulnerability assessments, adaptation and mitigation financing and support to coastal communities to combat the impact of climate change
- Review and implement the recommendations of the CHR National Inquiry on Climate Change



Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Trends

- The Philippine Government only adopted one target out of 10 targets for SDG 14.
- The focus is on importation more than the basic problems faced by the fisheries sector.
- LGUs in coastal areas have a common position to protect municipal waters and ensure fish catch, but the dwindling supply are affected by trade policies.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- The Government's soft stance with Chinese incursion in its EEZ in the West Philippine Sea deprived Filipino fishermen of their right to freely and safely fish in these areas drastically affecting their incomes.
- Current policies and programs on trade liberalization of fishery products have not protected the small-scale fisheries sector and instead give biased protection to investments that resulted to overfishing and further degradation of fishery resources.
- There is weak law enforcement and low compliance to regulations as well as low capacity to manage municipal and commercial capture fisheries in territorial waters. Unregulated Aquaculture contributes to depletion of marine resources due as overstocking/over capacity, fish kills, pollution, and conversion of fish habitats like mangroves. Weak policy implementation is due to lack of government resources to impose regulations (human capital and otherwise). The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has one or two regular personnel in Provinces
- There is absence of Use Zones. Delineation and Mapping of Municipal waters to define boundaries not yet completed

- Environmental Impact Assessment are not properly done
- Mega-projects in coastal waters like deep sea ports, power plants, sand mining, mining of mineral resources and reclamation for tourism deny fishing communities the access to fishing areas. These projects also dislocate them from their living and settlement areas and cause harm to fish spawning and destroy natural fish habitats like mangroves, coral reefs and seagrasses.
- Results of economic activities, such as mine tailings, pollutants, and oil spills also harm fish stocks and fish habitats. Environmental issues such as pollution, displacement of fishers from livelihood source and settlement or shelters have negative impacts to fishing communities and ocean creatures.

Solutions and policy recommendations

- Resolution of international political boundaries from disputes.
- National and local governments and relevant agencies to protect and restore ecosystems to increase the ability of coasts and its people to cope with climate change. Government should practice and seek coastal community's prior and informed consent and conduct socio-environmental impact assessments before setting up coastal/fishery related "development" projects.
- Establishment of Communal Fisheries Zones — 20-kilometer or 10.8-nautical mile sea zone from the coastal lines, at its lowest tide — as free fishing grounds for small fisherfolk, ensuring free access for poor fisherfolk to larger fishing grounds according to the Open Access Fishing Rights to the Contiguous Communal Fisheries Zone, and exclusive use of Communal Fisheries Zone for Small Fisherfolk (vis-a-vis against the illegal poaching done by foreign fishing vessels)
- Elimination of exorbitant registration, license, landing, and other fees, wage increase for fishing boat workers and/or

reforms in the unequal sharing ("*partihan*") system. In line with this, scrap the "*consignacion*" system which sets a low price for their catch and in its place, the administration of cooperatives. Dismantle of the monopoly of huge commercial fishers, traders, and distributors.

- Ensure that marine life is sustainably utilized, small-scale fishing should be the primary system of fishing (in lieu of destructive commercial fishing). This goes hand-in-hand with the promotion and protection of small-scale fishing and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises or MSMEs.
- Review and amend or repeal accordingly all laws proven contradictory to a rights based, sustainable and ecologically– sound fisheries as espoused in the Philippine Fisheries Code and its amendments such as Republic Act 10654, RA 8550, Fisheries Management Areas, and 2019 Fisheries Administrative Order 263.
- Stop reclamation of coastal areas for conversion to commercial, recreational and residential use. Scrap the National Reclamation Plan covering 38,272 hectares across the country as this will cause destruction to fish habitat and breeding grounds which will deplete marine food supply. Stop the privatization of coastal areas for tourism and other uses that displace whole fishing and farming communities depriving them of livelihood and further compromising food security.
- BFAR to reorganize as Department of Fisheries, and increase support for local government units to strengthen capacity to manage territorial waters and EEZ
- Implement laws on Illegal, unreported and unregulated Fishing (IUUF) as embodied in RA 10654
- Complete the delineation of municipal waters (without offshore islands) BFAR to

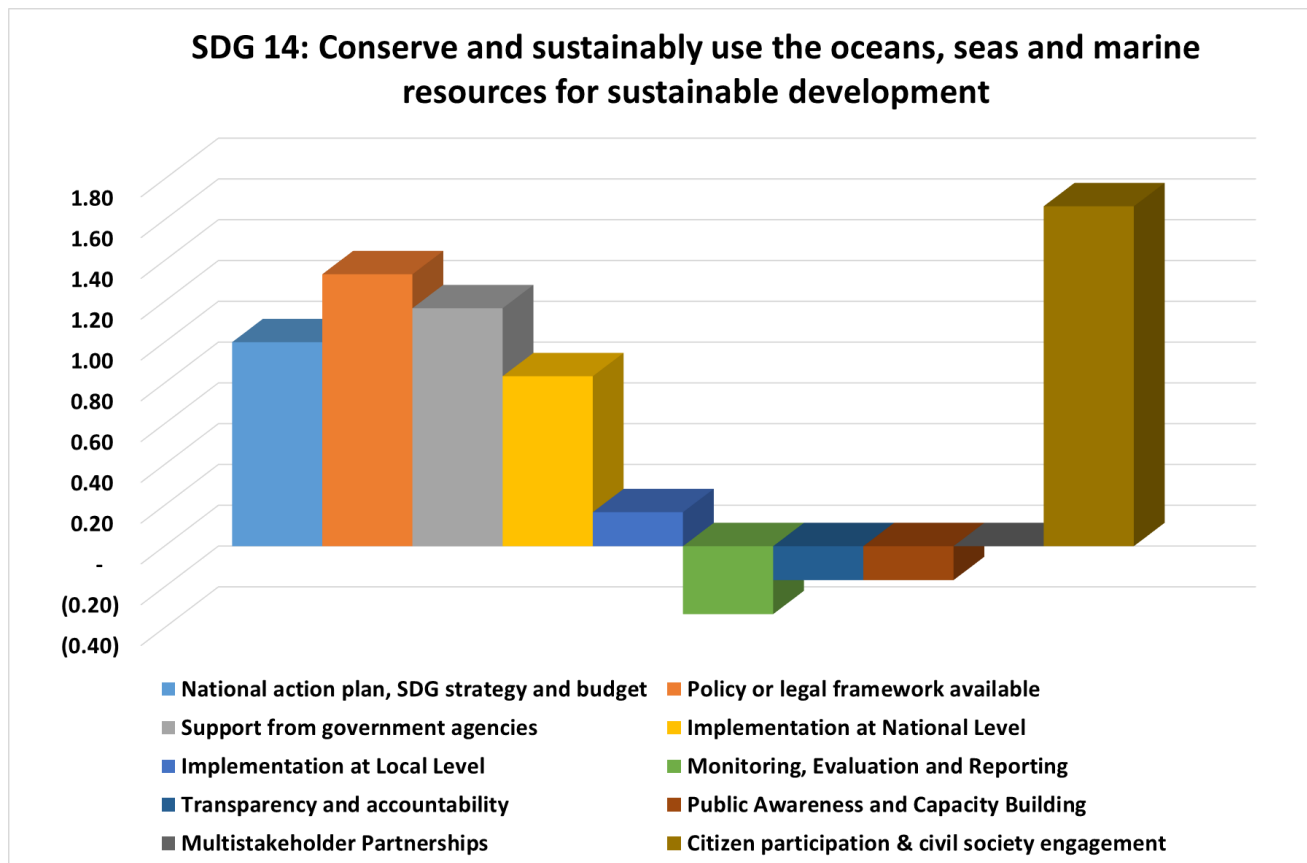
immediately issue guidelines (for those municipal waters with offshore islands)"

- Continue implementing closed season of certain species during spawning period
- Resource management bodies in common/shared water bodies and territories must be established and consider representation from small- scale fisheries
- A sustainable fisheries management framework should be adopted by ASEAN country members to guide management efforts
- Institutionalize Good Aquaculture Practices (GAqP) in the national law and local ordinances. This includes GAqP basic compliance on proper site selection, stocking within carrying capacity, animal health, other food safety issues, and environmental and social standards
- Valuation of natural resources and the ecological services to include in investment and revenue accounting
- A sensitive list (products that are proven to be threatened or overfished) must be drawn up. Commodities in the sensitive list should be exempted from tariff reduction in multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations and should be given protection during spawning period. Some examples are the small pelagic species such as roundscad, mackerel, sardines, and anchovies among others.
- Government should consider harmonizing fisheries trade policies with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the UN-FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and must be recognized in the ASEAN Charter and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of “policy and legal framework” had the highest mean score at 1.33 for SDG 14. Meanwhile, “monitoring, evaluation and reporting”, “transparency and accountability” both had garnered mean scores of -.17.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	1.00
Policy or legal framework available	1.33
Support from government agencies	1.17
Implementation at National Level	0.83
Implementation at Local Level	0.17
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	-0.33
Transparency and accountability	-0.17
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	-0.17
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.00

Policy

- The Philippine Government only adopted one target out of 10 targets for SDG 14.
- There is low capacity to manage municipal and commercial capture fisheries in territorial waters. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources has one or two regular personnel in Provinces
- LGUs in coastal areas have a common position to protect municipal waters and ensure fish catch, but the dwindling supply are affected by trade policies.
- National reclamation plan covers more than 38,272 hectares of coastal areas across the Philippines. This will displace thousands of fishing and farming communities and destroy marine life and compromise food security.
- The Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 (PDP 2017-2022)—the government’s blueprint for achieving the SDGs — lacks of policies that will support small fisherfolk. Its Strategic Framework on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, showcases its neoliberal value chain concept presented as science-based, sustainable and resilient production, food availability, access to market and safe food.
- The Government focus on importation more than the basic problems faced by the fisheries sector.
 - The country’s top produce in Marine waters, both for cages and pens is milkfish
 - About 97% of the production from Mariculture is supplied by seaweeds
 - Milkfish is exported in frozen form in 30 countries canned product in 23 countries and dried or smoked form in 7 countries
 - Shrimp is exported in fresh/chilled/frozen form Markets include Japan, Korea, USA, Spain & Guam
 - Tilapia is exported as fresh & frozen fillet, whole and gutted form Can’t compete with Thailand & Taiwan which sell at lower prices Not reflected in current official statistics
 - The Philippines is one of the top world’s supplier of Eucheuma seaweeds. The major export markets are France, Korea, China, USA and HongKong (66.5% raw form; 33% as carrageenan & kelp powder)
- The Philippine Fisheries Code and its amendments such as Republic Act 10654 and RA 8550 favors commercial fishing while it restricts small municipal fishers their right to fish and deprives them of much needed subsidies.
- The Government’s soft stance with Chinese incursion in its EEZ in the West Philippine Sea deprived Filipino fishermen of their right to freely and safely fish in these areas drastically affecting their incomes. This also impacted heavily on the country’s marine food security.

Situationer

- Fisheries and marine resources need to be protected, and this includes the resolution of international political boundaries from disputes.
- Current policies and programs on trade liberalization of fishery products have not protected men and women in small-scale fisheries and instead give biased protection to investments that resulted to overfishing and further degradation of fishery resources affecting access and livelihood
- There is weak law enforcement and low compliance to regulations. Unregulated Aquaculture contributes to depletion of marine resources due as overstocking/over capacity, fish kills, pollution, and conversion of fish habitats like mangroves. Weak policy

implementation is due to lack of government resources to impose regulations (human capital and otherwise)

- There is absence of Use Zones. Delineation and Mapping of Municipal waters to define boundaries not yet completed
- Environmental Impact Assessment are not properly done
- Various mega-projects in coastal waters like deep sea ports, power plants, sand mining, mining of mineral resources and reclamation for tourism deny fishing communities the access to fishing areas. These projects also dislocate them from their living and settlement areas and cause harm to fish spawning and natural production areas. These also destroy natural fish habitats like mangroves, coral reefs and seagrasses.
- Results of other economic activities, such as mine tailings, pollutants, and oil spills also harm fish stocks and fish habitats affecting corals, seagrasses, mangroves. Environmental issues such as pollution, displacement of fishers from livelihood source and settlement or shelters have negative impacts to fishing communities as well as ocean inhabitants.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- **CSO Key Asks:**
 - National and local governments and relevant Agencies to consider reducing human threats to corals, mangrove areas, sea grass beds, estuaries, living shorelines and others by protecting and restoring ecosystems to increase the ability of coasts and its people to cope with climate change and strictly enforcing fishery laws. WE call on governments to practice and seek coastal community's prior and informed consent and conduct socio-environmental impact assessments before setting up coastal/fishery related so-called "development" projects.
 - Establishment of Communal Fisheries Zones — 20-kilometer or 10.8-nautical mile sea zone from the coastal lines, at its lowest tide — as free fishing grounds for small fisherfolk, ensuring free access for poor fisherfolk to larger fishing grounds according to the Open Access Fishing Rights to the Contiguous Communal Fisheries Zone, and exclusive use of Communal Fisheries Zone for Small Fisherfolk (vis-a-vis against the illegal poaching done by foreign fishing vessels)
 - Elimination of exorbitant registration, license, landing, and other fees, wage increase for fishing boat workers and/or reforms in the unequal sharing ("*partihan*") system. In line with this, scrap the "*consignacion*" system which sets a low price for their catch and in its place, the administration of cooperatives.
 - Dismantling of the monopoly of huge commercial fishers, traders, and distributors.
 - To ensure that marine life is sustainably utilized, small-scale fishing should be the primary system of fishing (in lieu of destructive commercial fishing). This goes hand-in-hand with the promotion and protection of small-scale fishing and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises or MSMEs.
 - State support to the National Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Industry is also urgent.
 - Review and amend or repeal accordingly if proven contradictory to a rights based, sustainable and ecologically – sound fisheries the Philippine Fisheries Code and its amendments such as Republic Act 10654 and RA 8550. Likewise, the Fisheries Management Areas (FMAs) through the 2019 Fisheries Administrative Order 263.

- Stop reclamation of coastal areas for conversion to commercial, recreational and residential use. Scrap the National Reclamation Plan covering 38,272 hectares across the country as this will cause destruction to fish habitat and breeding grounds which will worsen the depletion of marine food supply.
- Stop the privatization of coastal areas for tourism and other uses that displace whole fishing and farming communities depriving them of livelihood and further compromising food security.
- BFAR to reorganize as Department of Fisheries, and increase support for local government units to enhance or strengthen capacity to manage territorial waters and EEZ
- Implement laws on Illegal, unreported and unregulated Fishing (IUUF) as embodied in RA 10654
- Complete the delineation of municipal waters (without offshore islands) BFAR to immediately issue guidelines (for those municipal waters with offshore islands)"
- Continue implementing closed season of certain species during spawning period
- Resource management bodies in common/shared water bodies and territories must be established and consider representation from small- scale fisheries
- A sustainable fisheries management framework should be adopted by ASEAN country members to guide management efforts
- Institutionalize Good Aquaculture Practices (GAqP) in the national law and local ordinances. This includes GAqP basic compliance on proper site selection, stocking within carrying capacity, animal health, other food safety issues, and environmental and social standards
- Valuation of natural resources and the ecological services to include in investment and revenue accounting
- Implement the law which requires all projects and Investments undergo Environmental Impact Assessment and ensure public consultation to inform the communities and the possible impacts to their livelihood, settlements and environment
- The government and relevant agencies to take into consideration that sustainability of fisheries products highly dependent on ecological balance and therefore should be given special and differential treatment.
- A sensitive list (products that are proven to be threatened or overfished) must be drawn up. Commodities in the sensitive list should be exempted from tariff reduction in multilateral and bilateral trade negotiations and should be given protection during spawning period. Some examples are the small pelagic species such as roundscad, mackerel, sardines, and anchovies among others.
- Government should consider harmonizing fisheries trade policies with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the UN-FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and must be recognized in the ASEAN Charter and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation



Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Trends

- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has a small budget and dependent on LGUs

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- The conversion of agricultural lands to urban housing (including gentrified suburban housing for the rich) continues.
- Extractive industries and new explorations continue to harm the environment, hasten desertification. These also cause disasters that result to losses and damages to lives.
- Land grabbing continues as speculation of land increases. There are allegations that land grabbing happens because of the Government's BBB infrastructure program.
- Demolitions by state forces, security agents of private developers and corporations of abode of farming communities and economic displacement of farmers because of land use conversions for recreational, commercial, industrial use and for commercial plantations as well as large infrastructure projects.

- Dislocation of IP communities and upland settlers in areas covered by large infrastructure projects i.e., large dam projects - Gened 1, Chico Dams, Alimit Dams in the Cordillera Administrative Region; New Centennial Water Source Project (Kaliwa, Kanan and Laiban Dams) in Rizal and Quezon Provinces in Region IV-A; Pulanggi V dam in Bukidnon province; Jalaur Dam and Panay Integrated River Development Project in Panay and Iloilo provinces; New Clark City project in Pampanga province
- Large-scale mining operations destroy food production systems and large-scale farming areas and fishing grounds cause pollution
- The physical displacement and economic dislocation result to increased food insecurity with massive LUC of food producing areas; increased job insecurity / unemployment; and increased urban congestion as farmers and their families are driven towards the cities .

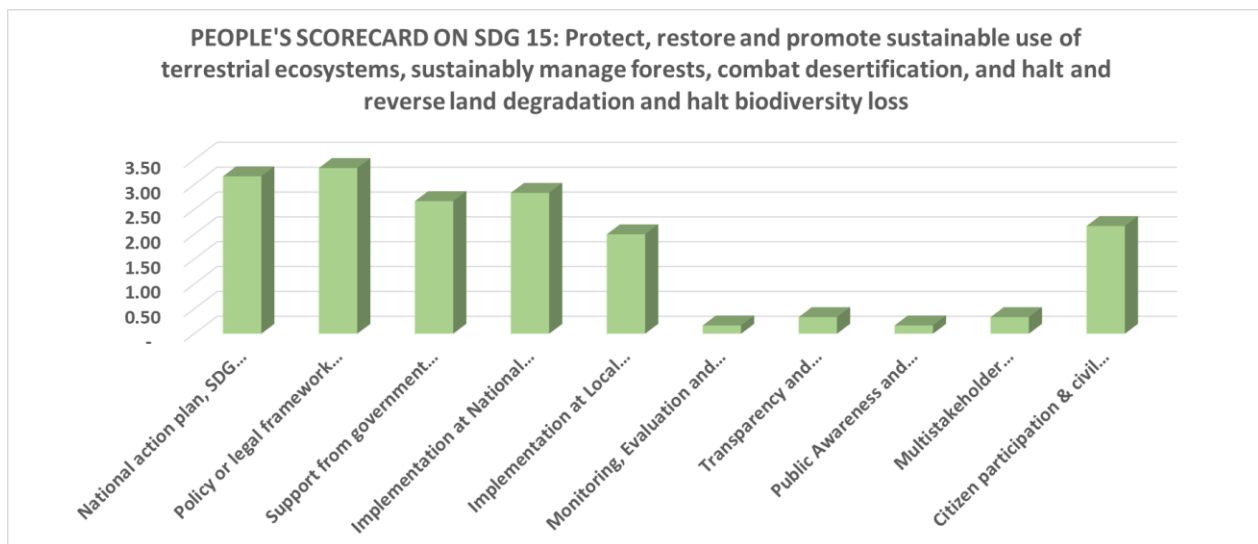
Solutions and policy recommendations

- Review the IPRA and its implementation including its implementing arm.
- Recall / stop all projects that violated the free, prior and informed consent of IP communities (including fraudulent and manipulated FPICs).
- Revoke statute creating IDFs and their installation in communities.
- Implement genuine agrarian reform program starting with genuine land redistribution.
- Repeal Mining Act of 1995 and in its place legislate the People's Mining Bill



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of “policy and legal framework” for SDG 15 had the highest mean score at 3.33. Meanwhile, “monitoring, evaluation and reporting” and “public awareness and capacity building” both garnered a mean score of .17.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	3.17
Policy or legal framework available	3.33
Support from government agencies	2.67
Implementation at National Level	2.83
Implementation at Local Level	2.00
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.17
Transparency and accountability	0.33
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.17
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.33
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	2.17

Policy

- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has a small budget and dependent on LGUs

Trends

- The conversion of agricultural lands to urban housing (including gentrified suburban housing for the rich) continues.
- Extractive industries and new explorations continue to harm the environment, hasten desertification. These also cause disasters that result to losses and damages to lives.
- Land grabbing continues as speculation of land increases. There are allegations that land grabbing happens because of the Government's BBB infrastructure program.
- Demolitions by state forces, security agents of private developers and corporations of abode of farming communities and economic displacement of farmers because of land use conversions for recreational, commercial, industrial use and for commercial plantations as well as large infrastructure projects.
- Dislocation of IP communities and upland settlers in areas covered by large infrastructure projects i.e., large dam projects - Gened 1, Chico Dams, Alimit Dams in the Cordillera Administrative Region; New Centennial Water Source Project (Kaliwa, Kanan and Laiban Dams) in Rizal and Quezon Provinces in Region IV-A; Pulanggi V dam in Bukidnon province; Jalaur Dam and Panay Integrated River Development Project in Panay and Iloilo provinces; New Clark City project in Pampanga province
- Large-scale mining operations destroy food production systems and large-scale farming areas and fishing grounds cause pollution
- The physical displacement and economic dislocation result to increased food insecurity with massive **LUC** of food producing areas; increased job insecurity / unemployment; and increased urban congestion as farmers and their families are driven towards the cities .

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- **CSO Key Asks:**
 - Review the IPRA and its implementation including its implementing arm.
 - Recall / stop all projects that violated the free, prior and informed consent of IP communities (including fraudulent and manipulated **FPICs**).
 - Revoke statute creating **IDFs** and their installation in communities.
 - Implement genuine agrarian reform program starting with genuine land redistribution.
 - Repeal Mining Act of 1995 and in its place legislate the People's Mining Bill



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Trends

- In the past 5-6 years, policies on peace and justice are mostly on the law enforcement side. Preventive strategies are lacking or not sustained. The administration of justice have some progress but it is still slow and more favorable to individuals who are rich or have connections with the government officials.
 - High prevalence of violence against children. A study found that 80 per cent of the youth ages 12 to 24 years old has experienced violence. (cite study) Most child protection programs are underfinanced, especially on the component of prevention mechanisms and services.
 - A sizeable portion of debt was incurred and huge budget is allocated for counter-insurgency program anti-drug war campaign
- Military operations in IP areas with active struggles against destructive infrastructure projects. Use or investment defense forces (IDF) that attack and intimidate IP communities.
 - Safety security and protection issues for church workers advocating for justice issues
 - Corruption such as issues on Philhealth and Pharmally during the time of COVID-19 pandemic
 - Honoring Hague rulings on West Philippine Sea
 - The commission on elections junked disqualification cases against son of dictator running for presidency
 - Unionism and collective bargaining have been repressed in export processing zones
 - Abuses against workers' rights and decent work deficits are likewise committed by Transnational Companies (TNCs) across the different levels of the global supply chain, as less developed countries compete against each other to attract foreign direct investments through tax holidays and the lowering of labor standards and costs.
 - Illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, in both national fishing territories and borders in the shared water bodies still remains a problem. This contributes to further depletion of fishery resources and increase cases of trafficking in persons. There are documented stories of our small fishers arrested for fishing in disputed territorial boundaries and receiving inhumane treatment from police authorities, without appropriate assistance from their own country government authorities. This may be largely due to unclear territorial boundaries and the overlapping territorial claims among ASEAN member countries
 - There is an alarming situation of trafficking of persons in the ASEAN Region. Many workers are being forced to work in fishing boats illegally in the Region.

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- The implementation of the Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (PPAEVAC) is yet to be reviewed.
- The Philippine Justice System was biased against the poor, while being protective and partial to the rich, politically influential families and big business. (may cite example)
- Closure of Lumad schools red tagged amid their promotion of sustainable agriculture, IP rights for self-determination and their right to their ancestral domain, and development.

Solutions and policy recommendations

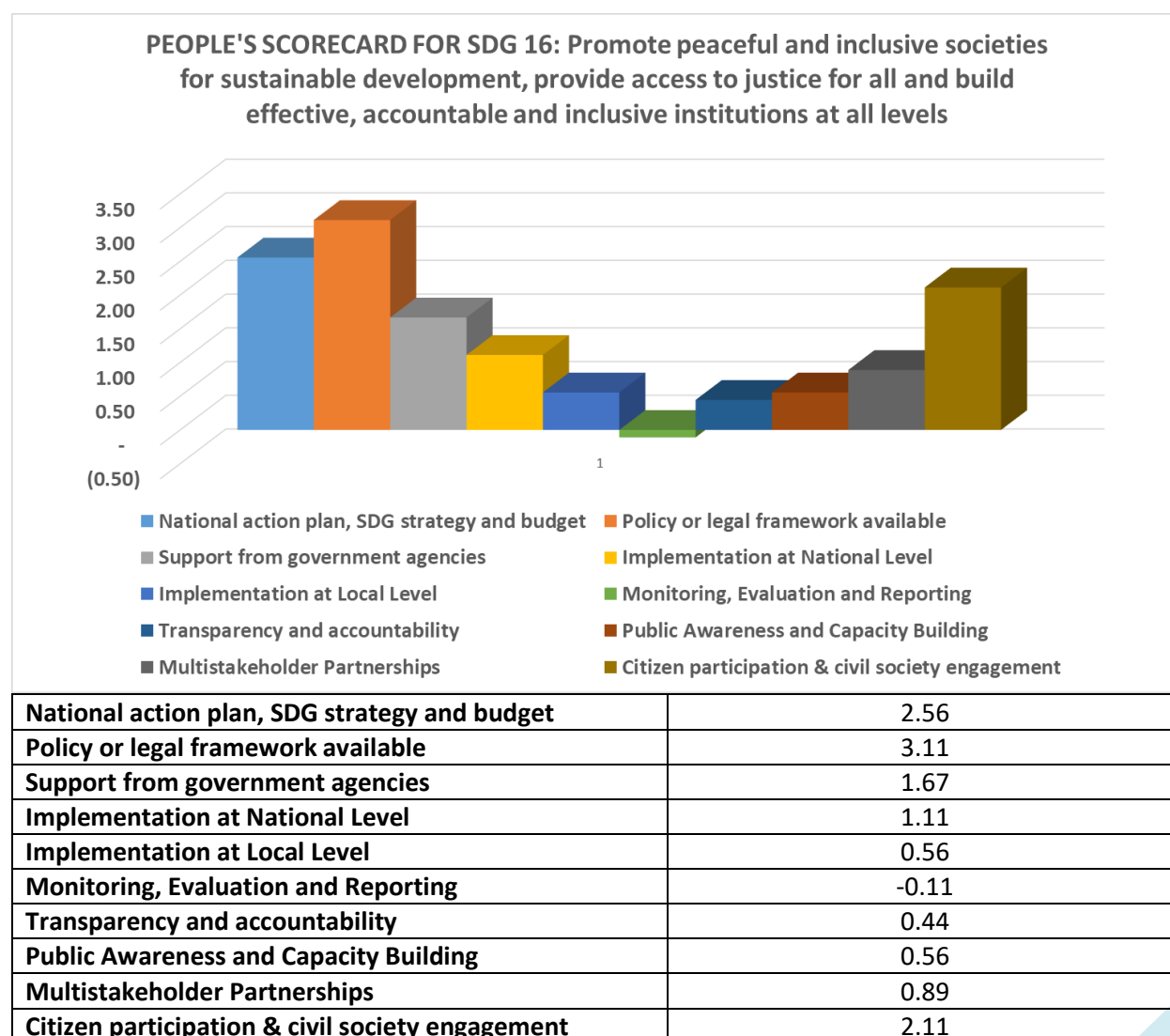
- Human rights and SDGs are interconnected. Civil and political rights must be protected by the state and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) must continue to function at its best capacity and its incoming leaders must be known for their integrity and commitment to uphold HR. The danger of historical revisionism and outright disinformation to obliterate the violations committed by the Marcos dictatorship is real with his family determined to clear his name in history. This is a major challenge under the new administration.
- There is a need for a sunset review of the implementation of the Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (PPAEVAC).
- ASEAN governments and relevant Agencies to discuss and implement guidelines on illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing (IUU) in the Southeast Asia Region in accordance with the United Nations.
- In the absence of clear territorial decisions, ASEAN governments and relevant Agencies should be able to develop and strengthen mechanisms on cross-border cooperation of shared or common water bodies at least for clearer fishing rules for artisanal fishers.
- Consider instituting measures and mechanism to address the human trafficking within ASEAN member states forcing persons to work illegally in distant water fleets.
- Investigate cases of human rights violations - CPR and ESCR - committed against farmers, IPs, land rights defenders and environmental defenders and according bring to justice the violators especially duty bearers

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of “policy and legal framework” for SDG 16 had the highest mean score at 3.11. Meanwhile, “monitoring, evaluation and reporting” had the lowest mean score at -0.11.



Policy

- In the past 5-6 years, policies on peace and justice are mostly on the law enforcement side. Preventive strategies are lacking or not sustained (if there are any). The administration of justice have some progress but it is still slow and more favorable to individuals who are rich or have connections with the government officials.
- The implementation of the Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (PPAEVAC) is yet to be reviewed.
- Most child protection programs are underfinanced, especially on the component of prevention mechanisms and services.

Situationer

- The Philippine Justice System was biased against the poor, while being protective and partial to the rich, politically influential families and big business.
- High prevalence of violence against children. A study found that 80 per cent of the youth ages 12 to 24 years old has experienced violence.
- Closure of Lumad schools red tagged amid their promotion of sustainable agriculture, IP rights for self-determination and their right to their ancestral domain, and development.
- Military operations in IP areas with active struggles against destructive infrastructure projects. Use or investment defense forces (IDF) that attack and intimidate IP communities.
- Safety security and protection issues for church workers advocating for justice issues
- Corruption such as issues on Philhealth and Pharmally during the time of COVID-19 pandemic
- Honoring Hague rulings on West Philippine Sea
- The commission on elections junked disqualification cases against son of dictator running for presidency
- A sizeable portion of debt was incurred and huge budget is allocated for counter-insurgency program anti-drug war campaign that resulted in worsened impunity.
- Anti-discrimination laws and policies were cancelled out by anti-people policies and statutes that restrict democratic spaces such as the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020.
- Unionism and collective bargaining have been repressed in export processing zones
- Abuses against workers' rights and decent work deficits are likewise committed by Transnational Companies (TNCs) across the different levels of the global supply chain, as less developed countries compete against each other to attract foreign direct investments through tax holidays and the lowering of labor standards and costs.
- Illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, in both national fishing territories and borders in the shared water bodies still remains a problem. This contributes to further depletion of fishery resources and increase cases of trafficking in persons. There are documented stories of our small fishers arrested for fishing in disputed territorial boundaries and receiving inhumane treatment from police authorities, without Appropriate assistance from their own country government authorities. This may be largely due to unclear territorial boundaries and the overlapping territorial claims among ASEAN member countries
- There is an alarming situation of trafficking of persons in the ASEAN Region. Many workers are being forced to work in fishing boats illegally in the Region.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- Civil society participation exists but it is highly selective and not sustained.
- **CSO Recommendations:**
 - Human rights and SDGs are interconnected. Civil and political rights must be protected by the state and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) must continue to function at its best capacity and its incoming leaders must be known for their integrity and commitment to uphold HR. The danger of historical revisionism and outright disinformation to obliterate the violations committed by the Marcos dictatorship is real with his family determined to clear his name in history. This is a major challenge under the new administration.
 - There is a need for a sunset review of the implementation of the Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (PPAEVAC).
 - ASEAN governments and relevant Agencies to discuss and implement guidelines on illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing (IUU) in the Southeast Asia Region in accordance with the United Nations.
 - In the absence of clear territorial decisions, ASEAN governments and relevant Agencies should be able to develop and strengthen mechanisms on cross-border cooperation of shared or common water bodies at least for clearer fishing rules for artisanal fishers.
 - Consider instituting measures and mechanism to address the human trafficking within ASEAN member states forcing persons to work illegally in distant water fleets.
 - Investigate cases of human rights violations - CPR and ESCR - committed against farmers, IPs, land rights defenders and environmental defenders and according bring to justice the violators especially duty bearers



Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Trends

- ODA has been and will continue to be an invaluable and dependable source of financing for development in the Philippines. Throughout the decades, ODA has served as a stable source of significant funding for the government's infrastructure and human development programs and projects. Despite going through several periods of financial instability, partly owing to uncontrolled fiscal deficits and excessive government borrowing, the Philippines was able to introduce and sustain reforms that helped it achieve the sound macroeconomic fundamentals that it currently enjoys.
- There are existing policies that promote partnerships to attain the SDGs. However, implementation is not on the same level among all government agencies. There are still instances when government agencies work in silos that result to confusing or contradictory policies.¹⁵⁷
- The top three—the World Bank, ADB, and Japan—account for almost two-thirds of total financing over the period 2009 -2018.¹⁵⁸
- For the Philippine government the highest-priority sectors for ODA are education and transportation infrastructure. General administration, health, public order and safety, social welfare, domestic security, and agriculture and natural resources are the other sectors receiving major government funding.¹⁵⁹
- The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) serves as the Philippines' national poverty reduction strategy and human capital investment program. The 4Ps is the fourth-largest CCT program in the world in

terms of population coverage. It is funded by the national government with the support of loans from foreign sources.¹⁶⁰ Within the implementation period of 2016 to 2022, total foreign financing programmed for the 4Ps amounts to \$750 million. Owing to implementation delays, however, the government incurred commitment fees amounting to \$550,000 in 2018.¹⁶¹

- The government uses ODA heavily to rehabilitate areas hard hit by calamities and internal conflict, such as in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and the aftermath of the Marawi Siege in 2017.¹⁶²

Key challenges that have impacted the poor and socially excluded groups

- The country's debt is now at Php12.8 trillion as of April 2022. A huge portion of this debt has not gone to COVID-19 response but to the government's debt-driven Build-Build-Build Infrastructure program, military expenditure for its anti-drug war campaign and counter-insurgency program which were also directed at unarmed civilians, rights defenders and humanitarian workers.
- The tripling of ODA loans from what was planned means it will now account for 21 percent of foreign financing, surpassing net foreign direct investments, which account for 15 percent.¹⁶³
- While SDG 17 serves to ensure the means to achieve the other sustainable development goals, negative impacts of debt distress, corporate capture of development and militarization of aid have only served to worsen the state of development in recipient countries. In the Philippines, unequal and exploitative partnerships resulted in rising debt, inaccessibility of services and shrinking of civic spaces.

Solutions and policy recommendations

- Civil society groups are advocating for a "debt brake" -- While sound macroeconomic fundamentals may cushion its impacts, the

country might have to consider a “debt brake” if government borrowing exceeds manageable levels. Meanwhile, donors may emphasize grants in providing aid to the Philippines and other developing countries—whether lower- or middle-income countries—in this time of global health crisis. Development aid should also focus on building the self-reliance of recipient countries based on localization and the untying of financial assistance as well as support for transparent and progressive revenue-raising policies. This way, ODA can remain a potent and beneficial source of development financing for poverty reduction and economic and gender equality.¹⁶⁴

- Aid should focus on building self-reliance of recipient. Technical assistance should continue to focus on building the capacities of local stakeholders, including the private sector, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises. Development assistance should also promote gender equality and the economic empowerment of women. Indigenous ways and culture must be considered and respected in designing and implementing development interventions.
- For partnerships between countries in achieving the SDGs and people-centered development, and for ODA to be truly-transformative, the neoliberal economic development framework must be overhauled. People Economics as a framework that promotes social justice and democratic rights of the people can reverse the pro-business, profit-oriented, and anti-democratic legislations that maintain underdevelopment and social exclusion.
- Strengthening of local and inter-LGU partnerships with CSOs and private sector for SDG 17. Many of the actions needed to be done to achieve the goals can be done at the LGU level, especially with respect to climate actions and those that involve the protection of the environment and natural resources.
- The government return to its previous 75:25 deficit financing policy. This shift will help avoid crowding out private borrowing and

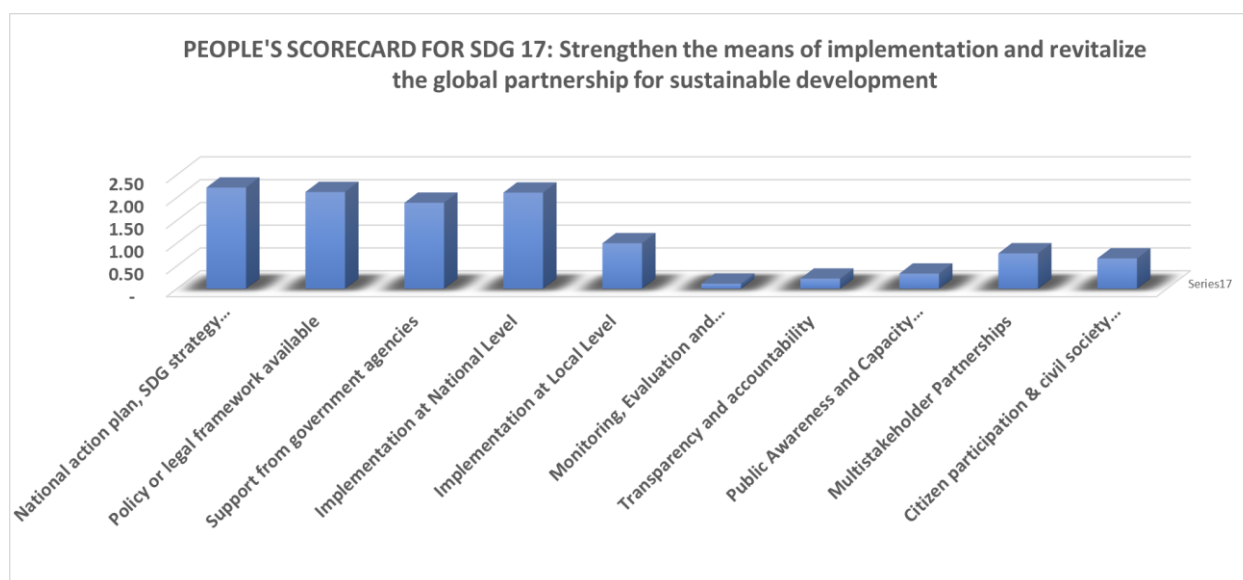
minimize the risk of worsening inequality in a country where only a small proportion of the population are net savers. The government should also make sure that future interest repayments will not displace much-needed investments in agricultural development and social services.¹⁶⁵

- Greater transparency and good governance in national tax incentives to effectively detect, deter, and stop harmful tax incentives. Governments and global institutions should push for progressive tax reforms -- address underpayment of taxes by rich and corps.
- The Group of 77 and developing economies should unite to call for an end to trade wars and to encourage US to stop imposing unilateral tariffs on any economy. They should call for an immediate end (with a clear timetable) to the US-China trade war. Developing economies should be allowed to slow down import liberalization and even allow to increase their own tariffs as the US start imposing tariffs on products at its own whim.
- UNCTAD and local CSOs echo the recommendations in a 2012 UNDP and UNAIDS study entitled The Potential Impact of Free Trade Agreements on Public Health: "To retain the benefits of TRIPS Agreement flexibilities countries at minimum should avoid entering FTAs with TRIPS-plus obligations that can impact on pharmaceuticals price or availability."¹⁶⁶
- The country would still benefit, however, from the vigilance of the international community in monitoring the use of government funds as it grapples with the pandemic and the erosion of some of its democratic institutions in recent years. The urgency of responding to the pandemic has also highlighted inefficiencies in procurement and other administrative processes of the government. These shortfalls should be addressed to enhance the absorptive capacities of agencies and maximize the utilization of ODA funds.¹⁶⁷



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

The availability of “National action plan, SDG strategy and budget” for SDG 17 had the highest mean score at 2.22. Meanwhile, “monitoring, evaluation and reporting” had the lowest mean score at 0.11.



National action plan, SDG strategy and budget	2.22
Policy or legal framework available	2.13
Support from government agencies	1.89
Implementation at National Level	2.11
Implementation at Local Level	1.00
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	0.11
Transparency and accountability	0.22
Public Awareness and Capacity Building	0.33
Multistakeholder Partnerships	0.78
Citizen participation & civil society engagement	0.67

Policy

- There are existing policies that promote partnerships to attain the SDGs. However, implementation is not on the same level among all government agencies. There are still instances when government agencies work in silos that result to confusing or contradictory policies.¹⁶⁸
- The General Appropriations Act from 2015 to 2020 shows that the total budget of the national government grew from \$45.2 billion in 2015 to \$96.9 billion in 2020. This rise amounts to an increase in public spending of more than 20 percent a year. Taking inflation into account, government expenditure still grew by an average of 9 percent a year, based on constant 2000 prices. Aid, recorded through program loans and project loans, accounts for less than five percent of the government's sources of financing every year.¹⁶⁹
- For the past few years the Philippine government has set a target for its financing mix of 75:25 in favor of domestic borrowing in order to reduce the country's exposure to foreign exchange risks. Domestic revenues increased substantially from \$46 billion in 2014 to \$70 billion in 2018.⁶⁴ The remaining deficit is financed through domestic and foreign borrowing from the private sector.¹⁷⁰
- Over the 10-year period from 2009 to 2018, annual aid flows to the Philippines were generally stable, normally ranging from \$1.59 billion to \$2.25 billion a year. The Philippines received more in other official flows (OOF), however, than in ODA during this time. The growth of OOF was driven by loans from multilateral institutions, whereas ODA to the Philippines was channeled mostly through grants. The top 10 donors accounted for more than 90 percent of total aid disbursed to the Philippines from 2009 to 2018.¹⁷¹
- For the Philippine government the highest-priority sectors for ODA are education and transportation infrastructure. General administration, health, public order and safety, social welfare, domestic security, and agriculture and natural resources are the other sectors receiving major government funding.¹⁷²
- The NEDA reported that from 2017 to 2019 gender-responsive and gender-sensitive projects received \$23.78 billion, or 77 percent of total ODA. Another 18 percent (\$5.62 billion) of aid went to projects with promising GAD prospects while only 5 percent (\$1.52 billion) was allocated to GAD-invisible projects. The social reform and community development sector received the largest share of gender-responsive and gender-sensitive projects.¹⁷³
- The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) serves as the Philippines' national poverty reduction strategy and human capital investment program. The 4Ps is the fourth-largest CCT program in the world in terms of population coverage. It is funded by the national government with the support of loans from foreign sources.¹⁷⁴ Within the implementation period of 2016 to 2022, total foreign financing programmed for the 4Ps amounts to \$750 million. Owing to implementation delays, however, the government incurred commitment fees amounting to \$550,000 in 2018.¹⁷⁵
- The government uses ODA heavily to rehabilitate areas hard hit by calamities and internal conflict, such as in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and the aftermath of the Marawi Siege in 2017.¹⁷⁶
- The Philippine government recognizes the possible existence of so-called illegitimate debts, as the General Appropriations Acts (GAA) of 2017 and 2018 included a special provision calling on government "to conduct a debt audit to determine the legitimacy of 20 government-contracted foreign loans."¹⁷⁷

Situationer

- While SDG 17 serves to ensure the means to achieve the other sustainable development goals, negative impacts of debt distress, corporate capture of development and militarization of aid have only served to worsen the state of development in recipient countries. In the Philippines, unequal and exploitative partnerships resulted in rising debt, inaccessibility of services and shrinking of civic spaces.
- The tripling of ODA loans from what was planned means it will now account for 21 percent of foreign financing, surpassing net foreign direct investments, which account for 15 percent.¹⁷⁸
- The issue of tied aid or tied loans—that is, aid or loans tied to the condition that the recipient procure goods or services from the donor—persists in the Philippines. Unsustainable government borrowing has led to periods of macroeconomic instability, but reforms to public financial management, including the adoption of debt sustainability management principles, led to a steady improvement in the country’s fiscal and macroeconomic performance.¹⁷⁹
- The country’s debt is now at Php12.8 trillion as of April 2022. A huge portion of this debt has not gone to COVID-19 response but to the government’s debt-driven Build-Build-Build Infrastructure program, military expenditure for its anti-drug war campaign and counter-insurgency program which were also directed at unarmed civilians, rights defenders and humanitarian workers.
- The Philippines has received more other official flows (OOFs)¹ than ODA in the past decade. OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) data covering 2009–2018 show that 52 percent of total disbursements to the Philippines consisted of OOFs, while ODA accounted for 48 percent. Private development finance figured very little, comprising less than 1 percent of total disbursements.¹⁸⁰
- The rising level of OOFs shows loans are the preferred type of financing to the Philippines. Total annual OOF levels showed an upward trend from 2009 to 2018, from a low of \$387 million in 2009 to a high of \$2.43 billion in 2015. In contrast, ODA remained generally stable over the same period, averaging \$1.14 billion a year. As a result, OOFs constituted an increasing portion of aid flows, from only one quarter of aid in 2009 to as high as two-thirds in 2015. Aid loans represent a small percentage of government debt.¹⁸¹
- At present, the Philippines is in a good fiscal position considering its manageable debt-to-GDP ratio and investment-grade credit ratings. From 2015 to 2019 the country’s debt-to-GDP ratio remained below 45 percent. As of the end of first quarter of 2021, the Philippines had a BBB+ credit rating from S&P, Baa2 from Moody’s, and BBB from Fitch.¹⁸²
- In 1993 the Philippines officially became a lower-middle-income country, signaling an era of accelerating GDP growth. Yet with this increasing productivity, the Philippines has also faced growing inequality, including gender inequality. Throughout the decades, ODA has

¹ OOFs are official sector transactions that do not meet ODA criteria. They include grants to recipient countries with representational or commercial purposes and official bilateral transactions aimed at promoting development but with a grant element of less than 25 percent. Official bilateral transactions that primarily facilitate exports, whatever their grant component, are also considered OOFs. The following are categorized as OOFs: export credits extended directly to an aid recipient, net acquisition by governments and central monetary institutions of securities issued by multilateral development banks at market terms, subsidies to the private sector to soften its credits to developing countries, and funds in support of private investment. (Flores and Pacapac, 2021)

played a significant but diminishing role in supporting the country's economic expansion. From 1990 to 2018, ODA as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) decreased from 2.9 percent to 0.4 percent. ODA providers have also adopted evolving approaches to supporting the country in the fight against poverty, socioeconomic inequality, and gender inequality amid the evolving landscape of development finance.¹⁸³

- There was a shift from grant forms of ODA (highly concessional finance) to loans (non-concessional) risks increasing the country's debt burden. This situation may cause the government and donors to shift available resources toward investments that guarantee higher rates of return and, in turn, could lead to less financing for social sectors that are proven to help fight poverty.¹⁸⁴
- In 2015–2016 the Philippines received \$1.245 billion, making it the third-largest recipient of the total aid targeting gender equality and women's empowerment as either a principal or a significant objective.¹⁸⁵
- The top three—the World Bank, ADB, and Japan—account for almost two-thirds of total financing over the period 2009–2018.¹⁸⁶
 - ADB's Country Partnership Strategy 2018–2023 focuses on three priority areas: accelerating infrastructure and long-term investments, promoting local economic development in Mindanao and Visayas, and making social investments in the bottom 40 percent of the population. The Bank is the largest source of Philippine ODA, comprising 28 percent from 2015 to 2018.
 - The World Bank's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) aims to help the Philippines achieve inclusive growth. The World Bank's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) aims to help the Philippines achieve inclusive growth. The Bank has shifted its finance in the past decade from traditionally hard infrastructure projects to investments in human development and the resilience of vulnerable populations. The CPF prioritizes the creation of quality jobs and workforce competitiveness, peacebuilding, the expansion of social safety nets, and improvements in disaster risk management and climate resilience.
 - Japan is the Philippines' largest bilateral ODA partner. Mirroring Japanese engagement elsewhere in the world, infrastructure projects are a cornerstone of Japan's development assistance to the Philippines. Aligning with the priorities of the Philippine government's BBB program, Japanese development focuses especially on transport infrastructure such as railways, roads, and bridges.
 - More than one-quarter of grants received by the Philippines is from the U.S. government. Two-thirds of these grants qualify as ODA and are for economic, development, and humanitarian assistance, while the rest are for military assistance.¹⁰⁹¹⁸⁷
- ODA has been and will continue to be an invaluable and dependable source of financing for development in the Philippines. Throughout the decades, ODA has served as a stable source of significant funding for the government's infrastructure and human development programs and projects. Despite going through several periods of financial instability, partly owing to uncontrolled fiscal deficits and excessive government borrowing, the Philippines was able to introduce and sustain reforms that helped it achieve the sound macroeconomic fundamentals that it currently enjoys. Earlier investments in the country's physical and human capital have also translated into rapid and continuous economic growth, even as several deeply rooted development challenges such as poverty and inequality remain—

exposing inadequate efforts to promote equity and inclusion in government programs and projects. Exacerbated by the onset of COVID-19, which brought growth to a halt, these concerns could be addressed partly through sound fiscal policy together with the strategic and inclusive utilization of ODA. Having shown solidarity in swiftly extending assistance to developing countries devastated by the pandemic, the donor community demonstrated that ODA could be a reliable funding source even during crisis situations.¹⁸⁸

- There is a need to harness digitalization to facilitate education and financial inclusion. This includes making digital technologies/communication widely accessible and reliable.
- Too much concentration on macroeconomic stability and import liberalization to the detriment of development
- Inflation stems mostly from supply side problems -- such as food production problems and high international oil prices. The government's main way of reducing inflation was massive imports of rice and fishes, plus increasing policy interest rates.
- Investors and rating agencies insistence on strong fiscal position force governments to implement regressive sales taxes. Tax reforms to fund government spending are regressive -- concentration on sales taxes, not income taxes
- Volatile global economy and vulnerability to external shocks brought about by trade wars, Brexit and global slowdown. Tax reforms to fund government spending are regressive -- concentration on sales taxes, not income taxes. The Philippines has undertaken massive capital account liberalization. A global economic downturn or collapse will trigger massive 'hot money' outflows that will destabilize the exchange rate and the external financial position of the country as well as threaten economic growth.
- For the Philippines, domestic demand stimulation has caused imports to explode, so much so that trade deficits are now larger than OFW remittances. This has caused a decline in the country's international reserves. As developing economies rebalance their economies towards domestic demand generation, their imports are naturally stimulated, trade deficits balloon
- Growing the manufacturing sector is confronted with challenges, not least of which is the intensifying competition in a rapidly globalizing economy. In light of the slowing economies, advanced countries have set their sights on the vast consumer markets of Asia. This rebalancing of the global economy toward Asia has implications on small economies that are still trying to build their industrial base. Moreover, changes in the global economy hit the manufacturing industries especially hard given their nature of having extensive links to global value and supply chains and due to sunk costs.
- The challenge today is how to transform existing globalization by making global trade fair, balanced and inclusive. The free-trade one-size-fits-all liberalization formula is clearly a narrow anti-development formula. The world should cast aside the neo-liberal ideology of unregulated markets in favor of a more flexible, balanced and calibrated program of liberalization and protection in the economy on a sector-by-sector basis as needed.
- Corporate tax rates have been consistently falling and the use of tax incentives has become more widespread across countries of varying income levels over the past three decades. Tax competition is driven by the belief that giving up greater taxing rights of countries will effectively induce global capital investments. This is problematic. "First, tax competition hurts Southern countries the most. Corporate income and profits are substantial tax base from which countries such as the Philippines can raise tax revenues without resorting to regressive types such as consumption taxes. Low corporate tax rates, tax holidays and other

tax incentives yield foregone revenues. Second, there is mounting evidence that tax incentives are not as effective as conventionally believed. In the Philippines, more than half (56.9%) of the incentives granted to 2,844 firms in 2015 are considered purely unnecessary, since their investments would have occurred even without offering tax incentives. (ibid.) Third, with the apparent ease of tax avoidance by transnational corporation, estimated to be billions of dollars, tax competition disproportionately benefit global capital that puts into question the integrity and fairness of the international institutional architecture of tax systems.

- Illicit financial flows (IFFs) drain Southern countries of much needed resources for development and undermine the integrity of their governance institutions. There is no agreed definition of IFFs but conventional measurements used limit IFFs to illegal/criminal activities. Illegal and criminal activities include smuggling, money laundering, drug and people trafficking, etc. This definition is problematic because it leaves out IFFs arising from commercial transactions that are legal but nonetheless illicit. A recent report estimates that Southern countries lose USD416 billion due to aggressive tax avoidance and abuse of tax regimes such as trade mispricing, offshore wealth and corporate tax abuse.
- Investor Protection/Investor State Dispute Settlement Mechanism (ISDS). Over the last decade we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of ISDS cases. From 2018-2019 investors initiated over 100 (107) known ISDS cases. UNCTAD estimates that the total number of publicly known arbitration cases against host countries has now reached 983. The signing of more investment treaties, including FTAs with more expansive investment chapters like RCEP, are partly to blame for the rise in ISDS cases. Clearly these agreements have emboldened the corporations to use this mechanism to challenge the States' right to regulate. More than 60 % of awards handed down by these tribunals in favor of corporations are between US\$10 million to over a billion. Add to this the enormous cost of litigation, it's not hard to surmise the tremendous strain these cases exact on public budgets and therefore the ability of governments to support development goals and the public welfare.

CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS & ADVOCACIES

- **Participation Mechanisms**
 - CSOs recognize the efforts to address the gap of a mechanism for Civil Society Participation in the implementation, monitoring, reporting and review of the SDGs, particularly through the Stakeholders' Chamber forum. There was an attempt to disaggregate data for the 2020 Population Census, although the results have not yet been disseminated widely. However, the late/lack of consultations among wider society for the country Voluntary National Review (VNR) is a serious concern.
 - There is lack of democratic space and participatory governance on pandemic management and on SDG engagement, including in the formulation of the 2022 Phil VNR. Meanwhile, in 2019, few CSO members of the Coalition were able to attend sub-consultations.
 - In April 2019, Plan International Philippines, in partnership with Girls Advocacy Alliance and the Joining Forces Alliance organized a VNR Consultation with thirty child-focused CSOs to provide inputs and comments on the draft VNR report. NEDA and

PIDS explained the VNR process and presented the draft report. CSOs shared their contributions, achievements, challenges, and recommendations with regard to attaining the SDG targets. However, since the pandemic started and up to the present, CSO members were not able to participate in any other consultations organized on the VNR and are unaware of who/which organization is taking the lead in the stakeholders chamber organized by NEDA. Other comments on the governance framework include the unclear information on

- It is not well-known by CSOs and as shown by limited knowledge of the CSOs on how to engage government mechanisms for SDGs implementation and/or oversight. Communicating the mandate of NEDA on SDGs and VNR can be further strengthened. It can also make the participation structures in the oversight more inclusive to more CSOs and widen the spaces for participation (e.g., inform CSOs on how to participate in the stakeholders chamber and on how to be invited in consultations it is conducting).
- WTO and bilateral and regional agreements signed by developing economies have unnecessarily forced them to prematurely open up their economies to imports, and have locked them into commitments where the state, academe and CSOs are prohibited from giving technical, credit and institutional support and assistance to the priority and beneficial economic sectors of the economies. Latest literature of market failures show that developing economies need strong state and institutional support for beneficial economic sectors to succeed and have multiplier effects in the economy. The literature also implies this MUST be accompanied by drastic institutional and bureaucratic reforms in the governance of the economy.

- **Official Development Assistance**

- The civil society-based European Network on Debt and Development (EURODAD) argues that, even if untied, “procedural restrictions” in aid contracts give companies from donor or rich countries an unfair advantage over local firms. For instance, it is common for donors to insert into the aid contract specifications for technologies and consultancy expertise that can be fulfilled only by more developed economies. In 2020 EURODAD reported a surge in tied aid, with the world’s major donors reserving “almost \$21 billion of their bilateral aid for suppliers from their own countries in 2018, \$4.7 billion more than the year before.” The figure represented almost 20 percent of bilateral aid. The group lamented that the increase in tied aid in 2018 “puts donors’ commercial priorities before the priorities of people living in poverty”.¹⁸⁹
- CSO Recommendations
 - Civil society groups are advocating for a “debt brake” -- While sound macroeconomic fundamentals may cushion its impacts, the country might have to consider a “debt brake” if government borrowing exceeds manageable levels. Meanwhile, donors may emphasize grants in providing aid to the Philippines and other developing countries—whether lower- or middle-income countries—in this time of global health crisis. Development aid should also focus on building the self-reliance of recipient countries based on localization and the untying of financial assistance as well as support for transparent and progressive revenue-raising policies. This way, ODA can remain a potent and beneficial source of development financing for poverty reduction and economic and gender equality.¹⁹⁰

- Aid should focus on building self-reliance of recipient. Technical assistance should continue to focus on building the capacities of local stakeholders, including the private sector, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises. Development assistance should also promote gender equality and the economic empowerment of women. Indigenous ways and culture must be considered and respected in designing and implementing development interventions.
 - For partnerships between countries in achieving the SDGs and people-centered development, and for ODA to be truly-transformative, the neoliberal economic development framework must be overhauled. People Economics as a framework that promotes social justice and democratic rights of the people can reverse the pro-business, profit-oriented, and anti-democratic legislations that maintain underdevelopment and social exclusion.
- **CSO Positions on Strengthening Local Capacities**
 - There is a need to strengthening of local and inter-LGU partnerships with CSOs and private sector for SDG 17. Many of the actions needed to be done to achieve the goals can be done at the LGU level, especially with respect to climate actions and those that involve the protection of the environment and natural resources.
 - The developing economies should be encouraged to rebalance their economy more towards domestic demand stimulation
 - Digitalization is important to facilitate education and financial inclusion, and must be widely accessible and reliable.
 - Short run macro policies should be consistent with long-term economic and human development goals of the country. Otherwise the macro policies are just short run palliatives to placate the foreign and domestic investors, not to ease the pain of the majority.
 - The government return to its previous 75:25 deficit financing policy. This shift will help avoid crowding out private borrowing and minimize the risk of worsening inequality in a country where only a small proportion of the population are net savers. The government should also make sure that future interest repayments will not displace much-needed investments in agricultural development and social services.¹⁹¹
- **Globalization / Trade Liberalization**
 - UNCTAD will promote and support the following:
 - Creation of viable regional intergovernmental tax cooperation mechanisms that will foster tax cooperation and prevent a “race to the bottom” that leads to billions of foregone government revenues.
 - Greater transparency and good governance in national tax incentives to effectively detect, deter, and stop harmful tax incentives. The rules and process for approving tax incentives must be clear and transparent, and information on compliance and impact (costs and benefits) must be available and accessible. Participation by parliaments and CSOs are essential in strengthening checks and balance.
 - Protection of taxing rights of Southern countries against commercial practices by transnational corporations that yield IFFs.
 - CSO recommendations:

- Support Southern countries in shaping a wider definition of IFFs and wider coverage of monitoring and measuring the same.
- Support the establishment of global and regional institutional arrangements and mechanisms that increases the financial transparency and empowers Southern countries to decisively tackle the development drain caused by IFFs.
- Increasing interest rates during inflations is a MUST for foreign investors and multilateral institutions. This view must be tamed. The domestic need to address the food shortages should take priority over interest rate adjustments. Oil price increases must be addressed by policies reducing dependence on fossil fuel.
- Addressing high oil prices require massive planning and implementation to shift to renewable energy sources
- Governments and global institutions should push for progressive tax reforms -- address underpayment of taxes by rich and corps.
- The Group of 77 and developing economies should unite to call for an end to trade wars and to encourage US to stop imposing unilateral tariffs on any economy. They should call for an immediate end (with a clear timetable) to the US-China trade war.
- Developing economies should be allowed to slow down import liberalization and even allow to increase their own tariffs as the US start imposing tariffs on products at its own whim.
- The Group of 77 and all developing economies should call for the right to re-impose capital controls on 'hot money'. The international financial markets should be made to respect such rights without counter-moves of sanctioning and boycotting countries imposing such capital controls.
- Developing economies should be allowed to impose more import controls, slow down their trade liberalization, and devalue their currencies as the US impose import controls and as the developing economies' trade deficits increase significantly.
- This, in essence, is the meaning of the “special and differential treatment” (SDT), a proviso in the WTO repeated nearly a hundred times in the WTO’s own founding document. SDT means not all countries are created equally and each has the right to pursue and plan development based on one’s level of development. This means trading arrangements should be concluded based on the principle of mutually-beneficial exchanges, not an abstract free-trade system or an inflexible zero-for-zero tariff system which benefits mainly the big and powerful. This also means investment programming and campaign for FDI should be based on a country’s real development needs for technology, market, value addition, etc.
- A guiding reform principle should be how to put people at the center of development. This means officially abandoning the neo-liberal Friedmanesque framework of economic planning and programming based literally on the abstract notion of free trade, on the so-called free interplay of global market forces unmindful of the impact of such interplay on people’s lives and jobs. Putting people at the center means there should be policy coherence in terms of economic, social, labour and, yes, environmental policies. Putting people at the center means there should be policy coherence at the national, regional and global levels.
- Putting people at the center means the global and regional financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and ADB should likewise change their lending policies by

adopting the above principles as lending guidelines. Lending should be in support of people's development and capacity building, not lending to squeeze developing countries further through onerous debt obligations and policy conditionalities.

- There should be bolder and more pro-people reforms in the financial system at the national, regional and global levels. The primary purpose of financial institutions must be to provide responsible and sustainable financial services for society, not to make profits for shareholders. This means bringing back the original purpose of banking as a mediator of financial service in support of productive consumption, production and circulation in the economy. There should be greater transparency in the operations and supervision of financial institutions, which can be achieved at minimal cost if the financial employees and their unions are mobilized for this purpose. One approach is the taxation of short-term selling as such activity is obviously speculative and subversive of economic stability; on the other hand, society can provide incentives to investments that are truly directed towards job-creating productive activities.
 - ISDS: Adopt the recommendation made by UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable international order Alfred de Zayas for States to abolish the ISDS system and put in place alternative mechanisms to resolve investment disputes such as : state-to-state dispute settlement; international collaboration to strengthen domestic legal systems;
- **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP)**
 - CSOs noted the lack of transparency and public participation and limited consultation process on the agreement among stakeholders for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP):
 - There was no public disclosure of the text of the negotiations. In the past, the text of the agreements are made public as soon as negotiations are concluded. There is a strong call from CSOs and movements for RCEP governments to release the text immediately.
 - At the regional level, a formal Stakeholder Engagement Process was initiated in 2016 (4 years into the negotiations). CSOs and movements engaged the process in good faith, using the limited space to articulate directly to government negotiators their issues and concerns. There was very little response and not much meaningful participation from the negotiators and the process has been described as no more than a 'ticking the box' exercise.
 - At the national level (Philippines), previous administration under Benigno Aquino put in place a One Country, One Voice mechanism for public consultation. This space however was designed more for participation of exporters to "maximize the benefits from FTAs" rather than a genuine, and open process for stakeholder consultation.
 - The CSO opposition to RCEP has been sustained over the last seven years, and the message has consistently been to call on governments to reject the agreement. RCEP is seen as a threat to peoples' lives and livelihoods. It is an agreement that advances the agenda of corporations first and foremost. It is an agreement cloaked in secrecy and negotiated with limited public scrutiny. Groups called on their respective governments to heed the concerns of the people and cease from forging this deal.
 - CSOs call for the following:

- Public disclosure of negotiating texts of RCEP and free trade and investment agreements. Make available to the public information about the status of the negotiations and adequate details of government positions.
 - Put in place mechanisms for genuine public participation and inputs into the negotiating process. Conduct independent social, economic, environmental and human rights impact assessments for these trade agreements. Put in place stronger mechanisms for Parliamentary scrutiny and inputs into the negotiating process.
 - Role of special interest groups in the process are made public, including publicly available information on number and participants of meeting, written communications and positions on advisory boards.
- **Intellectual Property Rights**
 - UNCTAD and local CSOs echo the recommendations in a 2012 UNDP and UNAIDS study entitled The Potential Impact of Free Trade Agreements on Public Health: "To retain the benefits of TRIPS Agreement flexibilities countries at minimum should avoid entering FTAs with TRIPS-plus obligations that can impact on pharmaceuticals price or availability. Where countries have undertaken TRIPS-plus commitments, all efforts should be made to mitigate the negative impact of these commitments on access to treatment by using to the fullest extent possible, remaining public health related flexibilities available.
 - **CSO Positions on Accountability**
 - The country would still benefit, however, from the vigilance of the international community in monitoring the use of government funds as it grapples with the pandemic and the erosion of some of its democratic institutions in recent years. The urgency of responding to the pandemic has also highlighted inefficiencies in procurement and other administrative processes of the government. These shortfalls should be addressed to enhance the absorptive capacities of agencies and maximize the utilization of ODA funds.¹⁹²
 - ODA utilization should be aligned with and monitored against the achievement of development targets under the AmBisyon Natin 2040, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁹³

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