



FOR JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Other PH 2030 Agenda



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

**FOR JUSTICE AND
SUSTAINABILITY:
The Other
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Introduction

The Philippines will be free of poverty and will be well on the way to sustainability by 2030. No one will be left behind. That's the promise, that's what our government signed up to in 2015.

This report, our report, entitled “FOR JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY: The Other PH 2030 Agenda”, is about taking on our government on that promise. It is an attempt by Social Watch Philippines (SWP) to present its view of the stubborn Philippine development dilemma and how it may be overcome. Through this report we offer our support and cooperation in figuring out the sustainability problem and finding lasting solutions to the cyclical problems of high poverty, high inequality and continuing environmental degradation despite or because of economic growth.

The promise to put an end to poverty, reduce inequality, share prosperity with everyone, and save humanity from climate change catastrophe are contained in the outcome documents the Philippines signed up to in 2015: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction from the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan; the Paris Agreement from the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change or UNFCCC COP21 in Paris; and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda from the Third UN Conference on Financing for Development (FFD3) in Addis Ababa.

The UN General Assembly created the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) as the body mandated to oversee the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs at the global level. The HLPF will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for follow-up. It will promote system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies. It should ensure that the Agenda remains relevant and ambitious and should focus on the assessment of progress, achievements and challenges faced by developed and developing countries, including new and emerging issues.

The July HLPF revolves around the theme of “ensuring that no one is left behind.” But who on earth wants to leave anyone behind, anyway? The question for us is, why the heck is anyone left behind, in the first place. Furthermore, ‘leaving no one behind’ might also turn out to mean included but exploited. For the first HLPF in July 2016, the Philippines offered to be among the 22 countries that will lead the national review and report as to how the 2030 Agenda will be translated into national sustainability plans.

Strategically, the scope of national reviews at the HLPF is expected to be the whole 2030 Agenda. Since the implementation of the 2030 Agenda only started in January 2016, countries are not yet expected to be able to report on the review of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. They could choose instead to focus on strategies and policies that are being put in place to *facilitate* implementation. Of course, it would be ideal if countries decide to and are prepared to share any progress and accomplishments related to activities supporting the 2030 Agenda. This would imply that they have already gone through the effort of defining a baseline for the SDGs. After all, they should have been doing sustainable development way back since the 1992 Earth Summit.

Our report, “FOR JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY: The Other PH 2030 Agenda,” tries to take the challenge beyond what’s minimally expected in the July HLPF national review.

There is enough reason to hope the Philippines can deliver on its promise.. The next three regimes, starting with the Duterte administration, will have to carry on where the Aquino regime left off -- a country still mired in high poverty, high inequality and continuing environmental decline, and leaving behind so many even after 24 quarters of high economic growth. On the 2016-2022 regime falls the responsibility of finding out why sustainable development still remains an aspiration after a succession of five post-Marcos democratic regimes. We need this baseline so we can plot much better how to do the right things and how to do things right. It is also requisite for tracking progress.

Ending poverty and achieving sustainable development are certainly noble aspirations. The question before us is why these dreams have remained out of reach till now. How are we going to achieve them this time around? How on earth are we going to do it in 15 years after one generation of trying to deliver on virtually the same set of promises, and failing? But to answer the ‘how’ question, we need to find out why sustainable development did not happen to begin with.

We would like to see the new regime’s plan as to how poverty will be eradicated and sustainable development achieved by 2030. We want to participate in the whole process, highlighting the people’s say in shaping whatever sustainable development agenda will come out of it.

Social Watch Philippines is now leading a process that responds to the ‘now what’ and ‘how’ questions. We have been consulting different non-state constituencies involved in sustainable development issues. The outputs of the consultations together with sustainable development proposals and solutions developed and propounded by many groups through the years are being considered as inputs to an alternative report, our “Spotlight Report” from the civil society perspective. We will do a public presentation of this Spotlight Report to government, media and civil society organizations.

We want answers to questions that have been bugging us about the (un)sustainability of Philippine development, let alone development worldwide. In our Spotlight Report we want to highlight key issues and concerns:

One, the high levels of poverty and inequality, amidst continuous economic growth, would indicate that excluded Filipinos *en masse* are being denied their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Two, growth not only fails to be inclusive, it is also unable to secure the jobs and employment of the included, many of whom do not even enjoy a living wage, much less universal social protection. The benefits from growth get even more concentrated in fewer hands and regions of the country. We cannot continue having one third or more of our fellow Filipinos living in poverty while a few billionaire families have got nearly everything.

Three, jobless growth and massive poverty lay the grounds for the never-ending, expensive catch-and-provisioning programs like the conditional cash transfer (CCT) and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). A big part of financing for these programs come from World Bank and Asian Development Bank loans, adding to the mounting debt burden that would be dumped onto the next generation.

Four, growth does not only come with high poverty and high inequality, it also comes with a huge carbon footprint. The Philippine economy continues to rely heavily on coal, oil and gas despite the Renewable Energy Law that mandates an increasing share of geothermal, hydro, solar, wind, and other clean alternatives to fossil fuels in the energy mix. The government has virtually abdicated its hold on power and energy to the big private corporate sector.

Five, the rhetoric of “multi-stakeholderism” and “partnerships” tend to mask state responsibility for what’s happening. Unsustainable development begets human rights violations and the state as duty bearer must assume principal responsibility. They are ultimately responsible for unregulated corporate activities that harm people and their living environments. There is an urgent need to voice the different roles, obligations and responsibilities of rights holders and duty bearers as enshrined in the covenants and conventions of the human rights system. This has repercussions for the discourse on inequalities, which should not only be about income, but also about structural issues and the responsibility of the public to address them. “Universality” needs to be understood within the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. To emphasize the “common” at the expense of “differentiation”, as in the case of the Paris Agreement, compromises the commitment to reduce inequality. There are greater duties and responsibilities for the rich and powerful, including extra-territorial obligations, which need to be taken in to account.

Six, to address the risk of getting trapped in limited agendas by others, work should be centered on self-identified priorities and wanted outcomes, including on formulating alternative policies. This includes the need to take an alternative approach to working on and with indicators: Are there indicators to better capture what should be measured instead? What are structural and political obstacles to be addressed within and around the work on indicators? How can the principle of common, but differentiated responsibilities be reflected and embedded in the formulation and weighting of indicators?

Seven, systemic issues and structural obstacles are areas that the 2030 Agenda is addressing inadequately. These issues and even those issues addressed in the Agenda – like climate change, the protections of oceans and land ecosystems and biodiversity – are mainly dealt with in gatherings and platforms outside the official follow-up mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda. Accordingly, the monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda will have to be addressed both inside the 2030 Agenda follow-up mechanisms and outside at other policy processes and venues.

Eight, any approach to address the systemic issues and structural obstacles to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda needs to be centered on the rights and needs of peoples. Accordingly, local and national circumstances have to be taken into account. They can serve as basis for alternative approaches to shaping policies, as is the case in many cities and communities, both in the North and the South.

Nine, there is a need to be vigilant about the encroachment of corporate interest in shaping the agenda. It is very clear that in the 2030 Agenda, there is a shift of the big role of private and business sector from the public sector role in pursuing the agenda. The underlying thinking is that the public sector can benefit not only from greater private resources, but also from private “efficiency” and “effectiveness.” There is a need to be critical about this thinking

because not factored into this equation is how inefficient and ineffective large private actors have often been in sustaining public goods and upholding human rights.

Ten, there is an urgent and compelling need to find ways to depart from development as usual, starting from our own vision of the future to the means of achieving it. We need to radically change what we value most in life in light of the cyclical unwanted outcomes that we are getting regardless of all the good intentions.

Indeed we must find ways to change everything that causes the unbearable human suffering around us and the increasing threat of climate change to our very existence.

PHILIPPINES: Achieving Sustainable Development*

Social Watch Philippines



In 2015, the Philippines joined the UN community in pledging to put an end to poverty in all of its forms and to achieve sustainable development by 2030.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its centerpiece 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not the only things the Philippine government signed up to in 2015. It also signed up to reducing vulnerability to risks from disasters (Sendai Framework), to contributing its share in averting climate catastrophe (Paris Agreement), and to ensuring that all these commitments get sufficiently financed (Addis Ababa Action Agenda).

Ending poverty and achieving sustainable development are aspirations long overdue. The challenge before us is how it can be done. How on earth are we going to realize these goals in one and a half decades after so many years of trying to deliver on virtually the same set of promises, and failing? How would the Philippines deliver on the more ambitious 17 SDGs in the next 15 years when it had not even fully delivered on the minimalist Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the last 15 years?

We need to figure out what's blocking sustainable development from happening. What would it look like if we were doing it right?

* Authored by Isagani R. Serrano, Co-Convenor, Social Watch Philippines (SWP) and president of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and the Earth Day Network Philippines.

Promises, promises, promises

The 2030 Agenda is not quite new. The commitments to build a world without poverty and hunger - a world where there is greater fairness and people are out of harm's way from natural, and especially, "man-made" disasters - have been with us for decades, piling up just like the problems they are supposed to address.

There have been so many such commitments since environment and climate change got onto the development agenda in the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. The Philippines had most of these commitments translated into our own policies and legislation, from the first environmental legislation during the regime of Ferdinand Marcos to the most recent law on "green jobs" in the just-ended Benigno Aquino administration. (PNA/Interaksyon, 2016)

Table 1 in the Philippine Senate's *GHG At A Glance*¹ shows that the Philippines started on the climate track early enough, although it has no mitigation obligation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Even before the 2015 UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris, the Philippines was already offering a 70 percent reduction from business as usual by 2030 of its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC).

Table 1. Philippines' GHG Emissions Reduction Strategies

Strategy/Activity	Year of Implementation
Formulation of the Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development (PSSD)	1991
Creation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change (IACCC) IACCC	1991
Creation of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to oversee the crafting of Philippine Agenda 21	1992
Enactment of the Clean Air Act of 1999 (RA 8749)	1999
Enactment of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003)	2000
Signing of the UNFCCC in June 1992 and ratification on 20 November 2003	1992
Designation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as the National Authority for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) by virtue of Executive Order No. 320	2004
Enactment of the Biofuels Act of 2006 (RA 9367)	2006
Enactment of the Renewable Energy (RE) Act of 2008 (RA 9513)	2008
Enactment of the Climate Change Act of 2009 (RA 9729)	2009
Signing of the National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NFSCC)	2010
Mainstreaming climate change in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2011-2016	2010
Signing of the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP)	2011

Source: Environment and Climate Change Division, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) – Agriculture staff, as cited in Philippine Senate Economic Planning Office (SEPO) policy brief "GHG At A Glance". March 2013

The Philippine Strategy for Sustainable Development (PSSD) was crafted in 1989, three years before the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The creation of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to oversee the formulation of the Philippine Agenda 21 immediately following the 1992 Earth Summit was in keeping with the Rio commitments to poverty eradication, biodiversity protection, and climate stabilization.

Poverty eradication has long been on top of the policy agenda. Almost all post-World War II regimes identified it, the more recent ones even declared war against it. The Social Reform Agenda of 1996 was the national translation of the 1995 Copenhagen Social Summit commitments on eradicating poverty, achieving full employment and strengthening social cohesion.

If the sheer number of policies and legislation were all there is to it, sustainable development might have been a reality by now in the Philippines. Some say it's a problem of implementation. But there are other more basic issues. While in some areas the country's laws may be profuse, game-changing bills such as those on land use and freedom of information have been pending for over a decade now. Moreover, existing laws tend to cancel out each other, such that if you find one that benefits the poor, there are more in place that protect the interests and assets of the rich.

Obstacles to overcome

Sustainable development may be defined as a kind of development that brings the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time. (De Graaf and Batker, 2011) This certainly is not what is happening in the Philippines, not in 1992, and not now.

Crafting a consensual 2030 Philippine Agenda is a huge challenge, which begins with understanding the obstacles preventing sustainable development from happening. We cannot be free of poverty and achieve sustainable development if we don't know what's wrong with Philippine development to begin with. As well, we must be able to find sustainable solutions to the issues or paradoxes that have been bugging development in the Philippines and worldwide.

1. Vulnerability and adaptive capacity

For sustainable development and quality of life, one study on carrying capacity recommended that for each person a total of 0.004 sq. km or 0.4 hectares would be needed to satisfy the optimum Filipino food requirement/capacity. (Mendoza, 2008) We long ago exceeded that carrying capacity limit.

The Philippines is a fragile archipelago smack on the world's typhoon highway. More than half of its population live along the extensive coastline threatened by storm surges and sea level rise. The country is fast urbanizing and is now home to 102 million people living off shrinking farmlands, degraded land and water resources, and deteriorating marine ecosystem.

The Philippines ranks third among 173 countries most at risk, as evaluated by the World Risk Index. (Alliance Development Works et. al., 2012) The Index stresses not only the magnitude and frequency of a natural event but also the social, economic, and ecological factors characterizing a country, looking at exposure to natural hazards, susceptibility, coping capacities, and adaptive capacities. Whether natural hazards will turn into disasters depends not only on the intensity of an event; it is also crucially determined by a society's level of development. Raising our adaptive capacity is a must.

2. High inequality, high poverty despite economic growth

While many are being denied their rights to live with dignity, the benefits from growth are concentrated in the hands of few billionaire families, the less than 1 percent who dominate the political economy.

Wealth and income are concentrated in select regions of the country, which is why inequality remains high at the mid-range of the Gini. (Raquiza, 2016; Albert et. Al., 2015) The situation in Mindanao is illustrative. (Serrano, “Breaking Through”, 2012) The elusive peace there is symptomatic of a much deeper problem. The level of poverty in Mindanao is so much higher than the country’s average. Mindanao is such a rich area, hardly visited by typhoons till recently, that it could achieve prosperity left to itself. How could it even fail to make progress on something as basic as the MDGs?

The poverty and inequality that continues to dog Mindanao, especially the Moro and lumad areas, are rooted in historical injustices and discrimination dating back to our colonial past and perpetrated by a succession of post-colonial regimes. They are imbedded in unjust economic, political, and socio-cultural structures urgently needing change. War is not the answer, as government had realized long ago.

Across the country as of 2015, more than 26.3 percent or about 27 million Filipinos lived in poverty. (PSA, 18 Mar 2016) Of these, 12.1 percent or over 12 million were below subsistence level, eking out a hand-to-mouth existence. About 5 million families, of a total of 20 million, lived below the poverty line.

These masses of poor people are being left out and left behind on account of gender, generation, physical disability, geography, ethnicity and culture. They are mostly found in the countryside, in farming, forest and fishing communities far away from Metro Manila. They are the landless, homeless, jobless who are unable to secure their food, education, and health care. The most excluded among them would be persons with disability (PWD) (Philippine Coalition on the UNCRPD, 2013) who also happen to be out-of-school, sick or stunted girl-children or older women, from indigenous people (IP) or Muslim communities. Their vulnerability would be most vividly exposed in times of disasters, as during the monster 2013 typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) tragedy.

Social protection is not universal. What is in place is so inadequate and under constant threat of erosion from privatization of essential services.

The country’s regressive tax system punishes the poor, including a wide section of the non-rich middle class, while failing to fairly tax the rich.

Jobless growth and massive poverty beget expensive cash and provisioning programs like the conditional cash transfer (CCT) and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). The 4Ps program is heavily financed by World Bank and Asian Development Bank loans, adding to the huge national debt burden (about 6 trillion pesos) that will be dumped onto the next generation.

Beneficiaries of 4Ps welcome cash transfer but don’t want to be “enslaved” by it. Even the most vulnerable among them, the people with disabilities (PWDs), for example, prefer secure and decent jobs that will enable them to buy food and nutrition, education, health care, and freedom of movement.

3. Growth with a growing carbon footprint

Our kind of economic growth leaves a huge carbon footprint. The Philippine economy relies heavily on coal, oil and gas despite the Renewable Energy Law that mandates an increasing

share of geothermal, hydro, solar, wind, and biomass in the energy mix. In the pipeline are 27 new coal plants expected to generate 8419 megawatts, on top of 19 existing coal plants producing 5832 megawatts of electricity.

In 1994, the Philippines released about 50 million tons of CO₂ from the use of fossil fuels in electricity generation, transport, industry, and in residential, commercial and institutional areas. This accounts for nearly half (49percent) of our country's greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory as reported in the Initial National Communication (INC) to the UNFCCC. In 2000, the energy share increased to about 70 million tons of CO₂, accounting for 55 percent of the total GHG inventory in the Second National Communication (SNC). (Narisma, 1999; Villarin, 2009)

The share of industry, agriculture, and waste sectors in GHG emissions has also increased. This may be due to increased use of construction cement, carbon intensification in conventional agriculture, and poor implementation of ecological waste management. Land use change and forestry (LUCF) in both national communications were reported as "net sinks" rather than sources of GHG emissions. But this may be due to failure to account for the degradation of land cover other than forest, like croplands and sparsely vegetated areas, wetlands and water bodies, and human pavement.

The Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) of 2001 that privatized the power industry is a big failure in reducing carbon footprint and protecting the public interest. The government gave up a traditional state monopoly in favor of private corporations involved in fossil fuels and extractives, yet got little or nothing in return. Electricity cost in the country is still the highest in the ASEAN sub-region.

4. Economy dominated by big companies

The Philippine economy was valued at about 9.4 trillion pesos or 224.75-B US dollars (World Bank 2011). By end 2016 the Philippines' GDP was expected to grow to 302 USD Billion and by 2020 to 398.97 Billion, according to Trading Economics.

Despite continuous economic growth, the country is unable to provide full employment, much less decent jobs for the majority of those already formally employed. Annual remittances Filipinos overseas ranging from USD 28bn to USD 33bn keep the economy alive.

The big companies account for only 0.4 percent of the 946,988 establishments in the Philippines, according to the data provided by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The 99.6% (942,925) are micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Of the total number of MSMEs, 90.3% (851,756) are micro enterprises, 9.3% (87,283) are small enterprises, and 0.4% (3,886) are medium enterprises. The proportion of big companies to MSMEs has not changed since 2010 when the National Statistics Office recorded a total of 777,687 enterprises in the Philippines (NSO 2010). In bad times, the MSMEs and the informal economy serve to cushion the impact of the crisis and keep the economy alive.

Corporations rule Philippine development, aided by government policies and public-private partnerships (PPPs)--the main promoters of the growth mindset. PPPs control the commanding heights "surrendered by government"-- land, water, electricity, transportation and communication, banking and finance, media, schools, hospitals, sports and entertainment. They run an economy powered by fossil fuels. They take the lion's share of wealth and income of the nation. They are beneficiaries of tax incentives and may also be responsible for illicit financial flows which run into billions of forgone revenues.

The country's economic geography illustrates highly uneven development and unequal distribution of created wealth and income. Primate cities suck up most of the resources. Metro

Manila, with neighboring Central Luzon and Calabarzon, would claim half to two-thirds of GDP. (Pernia, 2012) These regions are getting richer at the expense of regions like Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Cagayan Valley and, most especially, Mindanao. No wonder small savings deposited in faraway rural banks eventually end up in the vaults or ledgers of big banks in Metro Manila and are then lent to big borrowers who prefer to invest in already highly-developed areas.

Philippine development means developing the city and beggaring the countryside. (Serrano, “Assessing RD”, 2015)

5. Politics and governance by the rich

The government can be either an obstacle or a positive force for sustainable development. It remains a powerful institution in the Philippines despite liberalization. Politicians invest money to get in and hold on to power. It's the single biggest employer, with over 1.3 million on board in 2011, according to the Civil Service Commission. It commands a budget that now runs to trillions of US dollars, enough to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, and achieve prosperity for all.

In a country dominated by patronage only about 250 rich families wield political power. (PDI, 3 May 2016) Not much has changed despite regime changes occasioned by so-called “people power” revolutions. The failure of the Aquino regime's “no corruption, no poverty” agenda suggests the failure of both its anti-corruption and its anti-poverty programs.

Government is responsible for the tax injustice already imbedded in the system. While big investors enjoy tax holidays and incentives, wage workers and fixed income earners bear the greatest burden in the personal income tax (PIT) system. Employees contribute 86 percent of total taxes collected from individuals – that is, P271.5B out of P283.6B in 2014--- equivalent to 60 percent of total corporate income taxes. The biggest increase (15 percent) in the Bureau of Internal Revenue collections from 2013 to 2014 came from PIT. (#Tax Reform Now Coalition)

Unsustainable development begets human rights violations. The state as duty bearer must answer for the violations of social, economic and cultural rights as indicated by lack of food security, homelessness, landlessness, joblessness, poor education and health care, vulnerability to disasters, high maternal mortality, inadequate social protection.

Government must also answer for the unregulated corporate activities that harm people and the environment.

Change the system, change everything

There is an urgent and compelling need to find ways to depart from development as usual, starting from our own vision of the future to the means of achieving it. We need to radically change what we value most in life, in light of the cyclical unwanted outcomes despite all the efforts and good intentions.

The 2030 Agenda promises so much which may not be realized. It's like a narrative without villains: it does not say why we have so much poverty and inequality and who's causing it. There are underlying contradictions among its 17 goals, say, between growth and redistribution, which could lead to counterproductive results.

1. Prosperity without growth

“Prosperity without growth” could be a game-changing vision of the future. It means fairly shared prosperity with carbon neutrality, suggesting sustainable consumption and production. Is it possible?

Yes, if we slow down (Meadows, 1991) and shorten everything. Slow down, take time to grow and enjoy our food. Slow down and make time for nurturing our families and communities. Slow down and make time to produce goods that last for a lifetime.

Yes, if we shorten the food mile, health mile, education mile, leisure mile, whatever it is that alienates people from the means to live in dignity. We have to reduce and limit the ecological/carbon footprints of over-consumers and over-emitters among us even as efforts are being focused on improving the lives of the poorest, the most oppressed, the excluded and left-behind.

Ways must be found to dramatically change unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Current patterns---in food, homes, education, health care, leisure, freedom of movement---are highly unequal. On top of this, they exact a heavy toll on nature and the human environment, breach ecological limits, threaten systemic breakdowns, and destabilize the climate system.

The financial system should serve the real economy. The money game, driven by greed and speculation, cannot continue making claims on real people, honest labor, and nature.

Social enterprise (SE) (Dacanay, 2012), which combines economic, social and environmental bottom lines, could be a game-changer in a highly unequal society like the Philippines. The local economy and trading system, or LETS, may also be an alternative worth trying.

2. Justice and fairness

Yes, why should so few have so much when so many have so little? No society can be stable or sustainable that way.

Government must and can be an equalizer. It can establish equality of conditions through land reform and universal social protection. It must be able to tax the rich and prevent concentration of wealth in the hands of a few.

The Philippines can reduce inequality by changing the economic geography. We can reverse the big city-oriented development by supporting the provincial and local economies. We can do this by changing the pattern of public expenditure. For example, we can shift budget allocation in economic services away from already developed areas.

Let's bring the city to the farm, and the farm to the city to break the Manila-bias of Philippine development. The structure of growing and wealth creation that we see in the Philippines contradicts the mantra of broad-based, inclusive growth. Attempts to create growth centers away from Manila in Marcos's time and then during the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo regime are laudable. But they will not work unless government is able to break the current elite and urban-centered structure of power and resources. The Local Government Code of 1991 can be a means to decentralization and sustainable local development.

Government must see to it that adequate resources, and authority, too, are deliberately transferred from the rich regions to the poorer ones. This sort of “Robin Hood” act is very much needed in the Philippines.

3. Break free from fossil fuels

Solarize, solarize, solarize. The faster we can transition to the solar age the faster we will achieve sustainable development. Government can take the lead by solarizing the rooftops of all public buildings, parks and other common areas needing lighting. The ways and means to migrate from the current high-fossil fuel regime to a renewable energy-based one should be a no-brainer. (Verzola, “Crossing Over”, 2015) Only the super -rich who control the fossil fuel industry and profit from it would resist that transition.

We must revive and expand the national railways and lead the shift to a more sustainable transport system.

The sooner we shift from conventional, fossil fuel-intensive farming to organic and sustainable agriculture the better for our long-term food security. Sustainable agriculture is the foundation for a green economy. Sustainable land management (SLM), along with integrated water resources management (IWRM), can restore healthy soils and help achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN). Ecological waste management and community-based coastal resources management (CB-CRM) will help rehabilitate polluted inland water bodies and marine ecosystems.

Our commitment to the Paris Agreement demands that we break free from fossil fuels, starting with coal, and pursue low-carbon development. A realistic proposal (Verzola, “Remarkable energy plan”, 2016 and CREST, 2016) recommends that any new electricity demand should be met by 100 percent renewables. We can do without any new construction of fossil-fueled power plants. Supply is large enough to make the early retirement of some of the oldest coal plants possible. The government’s own energy efficiency and renewable energy targets were more than enough to supply all new demand with 100 percent renewable electricity. Had the government worked really hard to attain these targets, there would have been no need since 2013 to build new fossil-fuel power plants.

Change what we measure

Pursuit of happiness should be the ultimate end of development. We can learn from Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness which uses unconventional targets and indicators to measure human progress. Use of time for work, rest and leisure is classic example. The index’s four pillars, nine domains and 33 indicators might have universal applicability.

Individuals and societies whose happiness depends so much on fossils and money might find prosperity without growth and Gross National Happiness an assault on their right to be happy at any cost. That unsustainable lifestyle must change.

Albert Einstein said, “Not everything that counts can be counted, not everything that can be counted counts.” People use one or other set of indicators depending on what’s important to them. Consider, for example, Donella Meadows’ choices: percent of food supply grown organically; percent of streams you can drink from safely; average age of trees in the forest; population trends of migrating songbirds; distance between where food is grown and consumed; average distance traveled by a person each year; how many elections when you vote for a politician you really trust and like; average distance between living places of members of an extended family; average number of minutes spent every day in prayer, meditation, or quiet time; how many “clowns” in a village; number of people who say they have “enough”. (Meadows, 1991)

To some of us, the infant mortality rate (IMR) is the most sensitive single indicator of a society's wellbeing. It tells us the quality of nutrition and health care. It can be connected to the quality of water resources, homes, education, especially the education of women. It says a lot about how we take care of the most vulnerable among us, our children, and therefore our future. We can choose and focus on the most appropriate SDG indicators that hold the key to the resolution of the Philippine development paradox. (Serrano, "Breaking Through", 2012)

In short, we cannot go on seeing the unbearable human suffering around us and the threat of climate change to our very existence. We must find ways to change everything that discounts and degrades labor and nature.

End Notes

- ¹ Author corrected Table 2 of the Philippine Senate Economic Planning Office (SEPO) policy brief "GHG At A Glance" by deleting 'adoption of Philippine Agenda 21' and '1991' from the first row and adding a third row, 'Creation of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) to oversee the crafting of Philippine Agenda 21' and '1992.'
- ² Tomas Africa, former chief of the National Statistics Office plotted the almost flat growth of the Filipino middle class since 1985.
- ³ A case without precedent filed by a group of climate activists with the Philippine Human Rights Commission, is looking into the possible human rights violations committed by the Carbon Majors.
- ⁴ Slogan of a placard in a huge rally on climate justice in 2009 in Copenhagen UNFCCC COP 15. UK Sustainable Development Commission economics commissioner Tim Jackson is among those promoting the concept of

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Combatting Poverty, Hunger and Inequality: A Sisyphean Exercise?

By Ma. Victoria R. Raquiza*

The 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Scorecard is clear: the Philippines is far from attaining the target of reducing poverty by half of its 1990 levels. According to the Fifth Progress Report on the MDGs “Despite the high economic growth in recent years, progress in reducing poverty has been slow... natural calamities and economic shocks within the past few years have affected the rate of poverty reduction.” (NEDA 2014, p.2)

Insignificant change in numbers of poor amidst increased vulnerabilities

To be sure, poverty incidence had been on a slow decline since it was first officially monitored in 1985. However, in 2006, the country’s poverty incidence increased for the first time since it was first officially monitored through the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES). The FIES results come out every three years, and in 2009, 2012 and 2015, survey results show that the country’s poverty incidence has generally stayed the same (See Table 1). This means that while there are differences in the poverty numbers over the period, according to the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA FIES), the changes are so slight that they remain to be statistically insignificant. In other words, since 2006 until the first semester of 2015, the country’s poverty incidence has remained high and the country has not reversed the trend since.

Table 1: Poverty Incidence

	2006	2009	2012	2015
Subsistence incidence of population (FIES)	14.2	13.3	13.4	12.1
Poverty incidence of population (FIES)	28.8	28.6	27.9	26.3
Self-rated poverty (SWS)	54	49	52	50

Sources: Philippine Statistics Authority and Social Weather Stations

Furthermore, the poverty threshold in 2015 stood at P9,140 or P61 per person per day. That means that if a person earned P62 per day, then by government standards, that person was not poor. In concrete terms this means that Aling Remy del Rosario, a cigarette vendor with five children and a husband with no work, and who earns P1,500 a week, or P214 a day, is not poor (Agence France Presse 2016) (PDI, March 2013).

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Many civil society organizations have pointed out just how ‘ridiculously low’ the poverty threshold is, and that there is basis, at the very least, to double it, which in effect, may well mean the doubling of the country’s poverty incidence. This doubling of poverty levels is precisely what the Social Weather Stations (SWS), employing the participatory approach to poverty, has consistently captured in its self-rated poverty data (See Table 1).

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA website, July 2014), fisherfolks and farmers are the poorest sectors, posting poverty incidence at 39.2 percent and 38.3 percent respectively. It is also alarming that the period from 2006 to 2009 witnessed the worsening of poverty levels of four groups: youth and migrant workers with 1 percent point increase, and children and individuals residing in urban areas with three percent point increases each (NEDA 2014 p.17).

The 2015 MDG official report depict the poverty situation across regions as showing great variations where the northern parts of the country—the National Capital Region, Regions IV-A, III, II, I and CAR – have poverty incidence lower than the national average, and yet other parts of the country show very high poverty incidence, namely, the Bicol region and most regions in Mindanao (NEDA 2014, p. 17). It noted that the on-going conflicts and lack of peace and order in many places in Mindanao has dramatically worsened the quality of lives of Mindanaoans (NEDA 2014, pp. 9-11) oftentimes pushing them away from their homes and places of livelihoods in a mad scramble to ensure personal safety for themselves and their families.

In response to the series of shocks confronted by various vulnerable sectors, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in 2014, requested the International Labor Organization

(ILO) for assistance in the conduct of an assessment-based national dialogue (ABND) to serve as the basis for the implementation of the Social Protection Operational Framework and Strategy and the design of a Medium-Term National Social Protection Plan in the Philippines. The ABND is geared towards establishing a Universal Social Protection Floor (USPF) and will provide a budgetary estimate. The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as well as DOLE are co-chairs of the ABND process, which has involved a number of stakeholders in a series of island-wide consultations in 2015, some of which included Social Watch Philippines (SWP) members as participants.

Though DOLE, NEDA and the ILO worked in close contact with the Social Development Committee (SDC) and the Human Development and Poverty Reduction (HDPR) cabinet cluster throughout the process, there is perception of weak policy support for the USPF. Proponents of the USPF are now looking to the next administration for increased support for the USPF and are formulating a roadmap to strengthen its viability which will facilitate its implementation. In the meantime, CSO networks like SWP have convened workshops to discuss the poverty situation obtaining in the country and are now deliberating whether the USPF might be a viable, rights-based policy option. As of this writing, there are plans to further deepen understanding of the USPF among various CSOs, to reach out to government agencies like DOLE and NEDA as well as ILO, and to further explore USPF as an important social protection mechanism for the country.

Hungry and stunted Filipinos

The country's food threshold is a measure of food poverty or subsistence incidence, and which also is referred to as extreme poverty (NEDA 2014, p.15). As with the poverty threshold, extreme poverty in the Philippines was on a slow, downward trend until 2006, when it markedly increased from 11.1 percent to 14.2 percent. In 2009, 2012, and 2015, it generally stayed the same; in other words, it remained high (See Table 1).

Based on the "Democratizing Poverty Discourse: The Case of the SWS Self-Rated Survey on Poverty and Hunger" (M.V. Raquiza 2008), the SWS hunger incidence is one of the more sensitive indicators that captures ill-being (in this case, hunger). The SWS started monitoring hunger incidence in 1998, when it was first pegged at 9.7 percent. Since then, among the highest self-rated hunger incidence monitored happened under the Aquino Administration; in March 2012, it shot to 23.8 percent, similar to the 23.7 percent recorded in 2008 when the Philippines was undergoing a food price crisis (Miclat p. 3). In the last quarter of December 2014, hunger incidence was pegged at 17.2 percent, or the equivalent of 3.8 million families. In the last quarter of 2015, hunger incidence significantly fell to 11.7 percent, but then again rose to 13.5 percent in 2016 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Hunger incidence

	1st quarter 2015	2nd quarter 2015	3rd quarter 2015	4th quarter 2015	1st quarter 2016
SWS hunger incidence	13.5	12.7	15.7	11.7	13.5

Source: Social Weather Stations

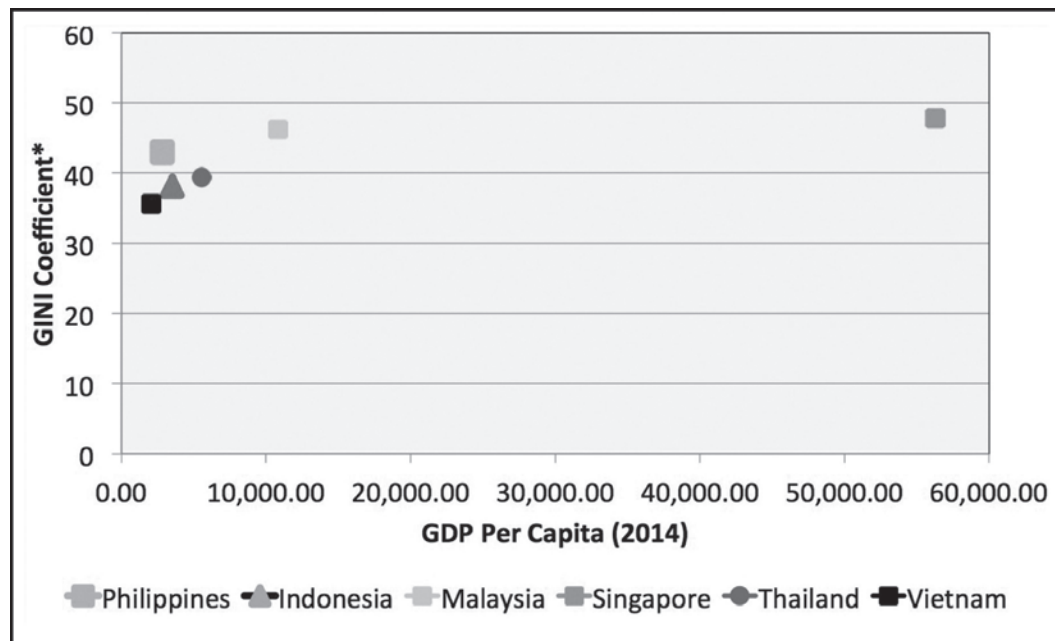
The 2015 Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) survey revealed that while wasting slightly improved from 8 percent in 2013 to 7.1 percent in 2015, persistent underweight and stunting among children actually worsened from 2013 to 2015: the situation for underweight children worsened from 20 percent in 2013 to 21.5 percent and from 30.3 percent to 33.4 percent for stunting. Note that stunting occurs due to “long-term food and nutrient deprivation that retards physical growth and cognitive development, and increases the risk to illnesses which may later affect economic productivity” (Miclat 2015, p. 7).

Oligarchic economy

On inequality, as with the subsistence incidence (or extreme poverty) and poverty incidence, the country’s Gini co-efficient declined from 1991 at 0.48 percent to 0.47 percent in 2012. In more recent years however, the Gini co-efficient has largely remained the same across 2009, 2012 and 2015. Moreover it generally lies in the upper end of the spectrum compared to other ASEAN countries (See Figure 1).

Former National Statistics Office (NSO) Administrator Tomas Africa observed that the country’s income distribution from 1985 to 2009 has essentially remained the same, where the upper 50 percent of families had 80 percent of income and the lower half had 20 percent (Africa 2011). While there has been no updated study on this, it is not likely that this trend has significantly changed in more recent years.

Figure 1: GINI Coefficient in ASEAN-6



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority

In 2010, Pulse Asia presented a nationally-representative sample of the country's income distribution segmented into the following income groups, namely, 9 percent for class ABC; 62 percent for class D; and 29 percent for class E. Class ABC can be further subdivided into class AB, which comprise 0.3 percent, and class C, composed of 8.6 percent -- although Pulse Asia estimates an undercount of class AB (Africa, 2011). According to Africa (ibid), when 'class ABC is further subdivided into class AB and class C, it becomes apparent that class AB could be the top 1 percent, with an income share equal to that of the bottom 29 percent class E.'

Table 4: Ten business groups' net worth in 2006 and 2013

	2013 Net Worth	2006 rank	2006 Net Worth
1. Henry Sy (SM group)	\$12 billion	1	\$4.0 billion
2. Lucio Tan (LT group) -	\$7.5 billion	2	\$2.3 billion
3. Andrew Tan (Megaworld) -	\$4.6 billion	8	\$480 million
4. Enrique Razon (ICTSI) -	\$4.5 billion	11	\$285 million
5. John Gokongwei Jr. (JG Summit) -	\$3.4 billion	6	\$700 million
6. Jaime Zobel de Ayala (Ayala Corp.) -	\$3.1 billion	3	\$2.0 billion
7. Aboitiz family (AEV) -	\$3.0 billion	13	\$275 million
8. David Consunji (DMCI) -	\$2.7 billion	21	\$145 million
9. George Ty (Metrobank) -	\$2.6 billion	5	\$830 million
10. Lucio & Susan Co (Puregold) -	\$1.9 billion	NL	NL
NL – Not listed.			

Source: *Forbes 2013 and Doebele with Vorasarun, Ramakrishnan and Nam 2006, qtd in A. Raquiza 2014, p. 241*

Cielito Habito, former Planning Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), was referring to this same top one percent of the country's population when he observed that in 2011, the 40 richest families accounted for 76 percent of the country's GDP growth, reinforcing perceptions of an oligarchic economy (Habito). The top one percent is also implicated when A. Raquiza (2015, p. 240) shows that in the last decade (from 2006-2013), those who made it to the top of the Forbes list tripled their network, and that those who made the biggest leap did so in the service industries such as utilities, property development, banking, telecom and business process outsourcing (BPOs). (See Table 4) In the meantime, at least 25 percent of the country's population continue to live in poverty, a figure which, as earlier argued, is really underestimated.

What are the obstacles in reducing poverty, hunger and inequality?

The stellar growth rates achieved by the country in recent years and the positive ratings from credit agencies have not made a dent in improving the quality of life of most Filipinos. Indeed, the obstinacy of poverty in the country is due to the 'economy's slow structural transformation that has affected its ability to create jobs and absorb increases in a relatively young and growing labor force' (NEDA 2014, p.8). By structural change is meant the 'continuous shifts in the shares of manufacturing, services and agriculture in output and employment in favor of more dynamic sectors' (UNRISD 2010, p.31), a process that is hardly taking place in the Philippines.

A key factor that has effectively hampered structural transformation from occurring is the government's neoliberal (open market) policy framework. In real terms this means a government deferring to the private sector, including international capital, as the main actor in such areas as agriculture, trade and industry, and the like (M.V. Raquiza "Elusive" 2016 p. 99). Bello also defined it as implementing, in uncalibrated fashion, free market policies like the liberalization of trade and capital accounts, deregulation and privatization of state-owned enterprises, including utilities (Bello 2004, 2015). This has led to the rapid decline of the agriculture and manufacturing sectors, and the expansion of the low-value service sector, much of which belongs to the informal economy (Bello *et. al.*, 2004, Bello *et. al.*, 2014, Ofreneo 2010, Lim). This phenomenon is not unique to the Philippines as "the free market orientation of development policy in the last few decades is associated with expanding labor market inequalities, persistent 'informalization' and the emergence of precarious forms of employment in many countries." (UNRISD 2010, p.29).

Instead of catalyzing a process of structural transformation, the government, with policy advice and loans from the World Bank, ADB and other international donors, have basically relied on a plethora of social assistance and 'community-driven' programs, foremost of which is a conditional cash transfer (CCT) program called *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)* to combat poverty and improve human development. None of these programs -- one of these instituted as far as 2002 -- have made a dent in reducing poverty whether at the level of beneficiaries or at the national level; on the contrary, as previously underscored, official poverty incidence even increased in 2006.

There have been two impact evaluations of the program since the CCT was piloted in 2007. General findings from the two evaluations show positive improvements in the education- and health-seeking behavior of *Pantawid Pamilya* beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries. However, there have been no significant improvements in terms of health and education outcomes (e.g., no improvements in nutrition, immunization rates, enrollment rates in higher levels or significantly lowered school dropout rates). Furthermore, consumption spending and poverty levels of *Pantawid Pamilya* beneficiaries were not significantly different from non-beneficiaries. Despite its lackluster performance, *Pantawid Pamilya* remains the favored program of choice of policy makers. On the one hand, technocrats favor it as it alleviates the high levels of poverty reproduced by the current open market development strategy; on the other hand, politicians are partial to it as the program is shown to have increased their (re)election chances, thereby fuelling patronage politics.

In gist, the main obstacle to the reduction of poverty and inequality is the adoption of a neoliberal development strategy espoused by international donors and technocrats that has led to the demise of the country's productive sectors, in particular the domestic agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Because of the consequent increase in poverty, inequality, and unemployment and underemployment, residual social policy in the form of so-called anti-poverty programs like *Pantawid Pamilya* is resorted to, just to mitigate the worst impacts or consequences of the marketization of the state and economy. Even if *Pantawid Pamilya* and the other programs, many of which are partially funded by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank through loans, have proven to be dull instruments in the fight against poverty, its 'clientelistic' effects also make it popular with politicians.

What can be done?

For the incoming administration, there is an urgent need to formulate an employment-centered, green, clean, agro-industrial development agenda. This means increasing incomes and productivity in the agricultural sector, completion of agrarian reform, and significant provision of support services so that new owner-cultivators have the ability to sustainably invest and profit from their landholdings. For more on this, see Sustainable Development Goal 15. In particular, it is imperative to focus on promoting agriculture-based micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that are linked with the manufacturing sector in order to create and dynamize rural-based industries with a view to creating decent work. This is critical given that the majority of the poor are found in rural areas. Furthermore, in this age of climate change and ‘resource wars’, the need to substantially invest in the agricultural sector to ensure food security/food sovereignty for Filipinos is paramount.

The service sector today dominates the economy in terms of output and employment and while it is an important source of revenue (e.g., BPOs) and has provided employment for a few, it is in the manufacturing sector where there are ‘more high-productivity, high-paying, quality and stable jobs’ (Yap 2012 qtd in Aldaba 2013, pp. 1-2; UNRISD 2010 qtd in M.V. Raquiza 2016, p.20). This means the country must stimulate labor demand in this area as this is an important source for decent work. In real terms, this means scaling up support, including in the area of adequate financing, for the Manufacturing Resurgence Program, while acknowledging that the Plan can still be improved. Also, given that 99.6 percent of all businesses in this country are MSMEs, there is a compelling need to support a strategically formulated Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Development (MSMED) Plan which is adequately funded.

Suffice it to say, the development of these industries should take place using low-carbon, green, clean and sustainable production and distribution systems. For more on this, see Sustainable Development Goals 7, 14, and 15.

Furthermore, the government must increase budgetary allocation to ensure the universal provision of quality public health and education services that are affordable and accessible. SWP members engaged in health issues, together with other advocates, have pointed to a crisis in the public health workforce. As such, stress must be made on ensuring that qualified doctors, nurses and other trained health attendants can be found in primary healthcare facilities in all municipalities, and even barangays, all over the country. The same is true for public school teachers. For this to happen, it is imperative that government provides adequate remuneration and other incentives to these frontline service providers, including the necessary infrastructure, supplies and equipment, for them to do their jobs properly in servicing citizens in local communities.

Finally, as signatory to the UN Conference on the Sustainable Development Goals, there is a need to ensure that the Philippines upholds the right to universal social protection, including social protection floors. This means there is a need not only to raise awareness and understanding of the USPF among members of social movements and civil society, but for them to own this concept by critically engaging its discourse and practice together with other sectors. This is an important task as the USPF constitutes an important component in ensuring that all Filipinos, especially the majority poor and socially excluded, have the opportunity to live a life of dignity.

But catalyzing structural change and implementing universal and transformative social policy will not happen overnight. In the meantime, hunger stalks the land, requiring

immediate measures. The inescapable reality is that the government no longer has the luxury of equivocation – it urgently needs to adopt and implement a national food policy consistent with the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in *General Comment No. 12* (1999) and the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food (2004) (Miclat 2015, p. 20).

The great caveat here is that or as long as the country's institutional and policy framework remains neoliberal, significant levels of poverty, hunger and inequality will remain staple features of the development landscape. It is in this sense that the fight against these scourges may prove to be a Sisyphean exercise.

End Notes

- ¹ Sisyphus in Greek mythology was condemned to the eternal task of rolling a large stone to the top of a hill, from which it always rolled down again.
- ² The poverty threshold in 1991 was 34.4 percent and the MDG target was to reduce poverty by half, that is, to 17.2 percent by end-2015.
- ³ Poverty incidence is the percentage of people in households with income below the poverty level as defined by the government.
- ⁴ On the 2006 FIES, NEDA Secretary General Augusto Santos explained that poverty incidence increased due to: 1) government's expansion of Value-Added Tax (VAT) in Nov. 2005 and imposition of higher tax rate in 2006; 2) higher oil prices; 3) population growth, which grew faster than personal income (05 March 2008 NEDA Statement)
- ⁵ The FIES is "the main source of data on family income and expenditure which include, among others, levels of consumption by items of expenditure as well as sources of income in cash and in kind" (Raquiza, M.V. 2008 citing <http://www.census.gov.ph>)
- ⁶ According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Universal Social Protection Floor (USPF) is a set of basic social security guarantees in order to prevent or alleviate poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. It comprises the following: 1) access to essential health care, including maternity care; 2) a basic income security for children that covers the minimum level for their nutrition, education, care and other goods and services; 3) a basic income security that covers the minimum level for persons of working age who are unable to earn sufficient income, particularly in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; and 4) a basic income security that addresses the minimum needs of older persons. These may take the form of child and family benefits, sickness and healthcare benefits, maternity benefits, disability benefits, old-age benefits, unemployment benefits and the like, some of which are already part of the country's social security system. As such, we will build and expand these social protection guarantees gradually and progressively, making sure it is coherent with national policies and reflective of our economic and fiscal capacities.
- ⁷ Food threshold is defined as 'the minimum income required by an individual to meet her/his basic food needs and satisfy the nutritional requirements set by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) (NEDA 2014, p.15)
- ⁸ Gini-coefficient is a measure of inequality where 0 expresses total equality and 1 expresses the maximum inequality.
- ⁹ The first impact evaluation of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program is entitled "Philippines Conditional Cash Transfer Program Impact Evaluation 2012", a study supported by the World Bank and AusAid and the second study is entitled "Keeping Children Healthy and in School: Evaluating the Pantawid Pamilya Using Regression Continuity Design: Second Wave Impact Evaluation Results" commissioned by the Department of Social Work and Development with support from the Philippine Institute of Development Studies, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- ¹⁰ Residual social policy, especially in a developing country context like the Philippines, is that which aims to mitigate the worst impact of a development strategy that is not geared towards employment generation and structural change, and views poverty largely as the outcome of individual failings rather than the result of more structural causes.

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Bringing Health Back in the Hands of the People: Achieving SDGs through Primary Health Care-driven UHC

By Ms. Ma-iMay-i Fabros and Rosheic Sims of WomanHealth Philippines*



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were shaped by the insights of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. With the same fifteen-year time frame, the vision of the SDGs is a *world where no one is left behind*, which defies the current development paradigm and mandates a re-conceptualization of values, goals, and processes. The interest of humanity and the planet are inextricably bound together in this collective process. The SDGs provide a comprehensive package of actions that measure a State's commitment and political will as well as people's effective participation.

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One of the essential goals is on health, the SDG 3: To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, reflecting an expanded understanding of health across the lifespan. The health MDGs -- To reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases -- now fall under the 13 targets of SDG 3. Also included are other targets to address sexual and reproductive health; maternal, newborn and children-under-five deaths; pollution; road safety; tobacco and alcohol control; non-communicable diseases; access to services and commodities; health human resources; and universal health coverage.

But health outcomes do not occur in isolation, and as such, the rest of the SDGs have direct and indirect impacts on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. One of the key challenges is enhancement of data collection methodology and inclusion of health metrics that really matter. Leaving no one behind means measuring what needs to be done and not only doing what can be measured.

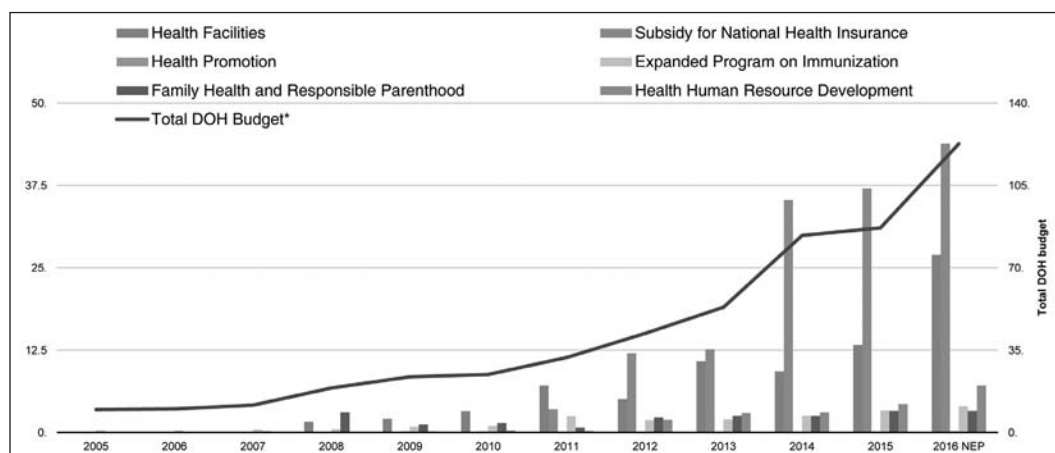
This paper tackles the status of health SDGs in the Philippines, the obstacles in achieving these, and some recommendations for the new government administration on how to achieve these.

Where are we in Universal Health Care (UHC) and ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages?

The critical task of achieving the MDGs spanned three administrations -- Estrada (1998-2001), Arroyo (2001-2010), and Aquino (2010-2016). During the Aquino administration Universal Health Care (UHC) defined as “provision to every Filipino of the highest possible quality of healthcare that is accessible, efficient, equitably distributed, adequately funded, fairly financed, and appropriately used by an informed and empowered public,” was envisioned to address the MDGs and health inequities.

The passage of critical health legislation under the Aquino administration -- the Sin Tax Reform Law of 2012 (Amendment to the Excise Taxation on Tobacco and Alcohol Products), the Ex-panded PhilHealth Coverage and Benefits Act, and the Responsible Parenthood and Reproduc-tive Health Law -- markedly increased resources (see Table 1) and enhanced policy environment needed to implement UHC. The earmarking of the additional revenue from the Sin Tax Law aimed to increase access to health services and reduce the barrier of cost in availing

Table 1. The DOH Budget by major composition (in Billion Pesos)*



of such, through the expansion of health coverage towards its claim of 100 percent by 2016, further enhancement of health facilities, and provision of medical assistance to the poorest of the poor,

Subsequent reforms on results-based budgeting aligned the DOH's Major Final Outputs (MFOs) with outcomes identified in the Philippine Development Plan and MDGs, particularly Goals 4, 5 and 6, making accountability for delivering results even more explicit. In the past few years, the DOH budget gave special focus on programs related to the targets of MDG 4 (Reduce Child Mortality); MDG 5 (Improve Maternal Health); and MDG 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases). But despite the increased resources for health, the three goals have shown uneven progress. And though this uneven performance is shared across the ASEAN region, the Philippines is the only country where adolescent pregnancy and HIV cases are rising.

The government claims that reducing under-five mortality is on track given the sustained funding of the national immunization program, as well as some indicators in Goal 6, such as that on combating malaria. However, maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and major diseases such as tuberculosis remain huge concerns.

The 2014 National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) MDG progress report cites various sources on maternal mortality ratio but all speaking of the same trend – increasing and alarming. Adolescent pregnancy is reported to have doubled in the last decade, with 1 out of 10 of girls aged 15-19 already mothers. In the case of HIV and AIDS, newly diagnosed HIV cases continue to rise at a furious pace. Now at 25 per day, a 10 percent rate increase from the same period in the previous year was recorded, with males (97 percent) and younger age groups (15-24 y/o at 27 percent; 25-34 y/o more than 50 percent) most affected. Prevalence and deaths due to tuberculosis remain unabated (Department of Health Epidemiology Bureau, 2015).

But there are factors that determine which Filipinos will live or die. The latest (National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) data substantiate the figures with some story behind the numbers, citing distance to health facility, getting money for treatment, , and not wanting to go alone, as some key factors that hinder women from seeking care during pregnancy and at the time of delivery. Young women, women with more children, women who live in rural areas, women with no education, and women from the lowest wealth quintile are most likely to face at least one of these problems.

Age, location, education and income status, and other social factors determine which women will live or die from something as manageable as pregnancy and childbirth. This is the same scenario with infant and under-five deaths, which occur mostly in poor households and in underdeveloped rural locations, where health interventions, including those for children, are scanty. Tuberculosis, tagged as a 'disease of poverty' because of the environment where it occurs and spreads, remains as one of the top 10 leading causes of mortality in the country.

Access to services and intensified nutrition intervention among women of reproductive age are needed to influence both maternal and newborn health outcomes. (NEDA, 2014). The intimate relationship between mother and child puts into question the supposed gains in reducing under-five mortality amidst an alarming and increasing trend of maternal deaths. In fact, Filipino children barely live past the first 28 days of life and these neonatal deaths comprise majority (46 percent) of under-five mortality.

This shows that aside from access to health services there are other determinants of health, such as access to food and nutrition that influence health outcomes. In the last 10 years, overall malnutrition or stunting rate for Filipino children 0 to 2 years worsened at 26.2 percent in 2015 (Food and Nutrition and Research Institute, 2015). The effects of hunger and malnutrition

are permanent, irreversible, and fatal, are detrimental to future generations, and can cause an earlier onset of chronic degenerative diseases in adulthood.

Even as infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia continue to cause deaths among the poor, the rise of non-communicable diseases such as stroke, heart attack and cancer brought about by increased life expectancy, modernization and deteriorating lifestyles, has led to deaths among 300,000 Filipinos a year. (See Table 2)

**Table 2. Top 10 Causes of Mortality, Philippines
Number and rate/100,000 population
1993, 2003, and 2013**

1993			2003			2013		
Causes	Number	Rate	Causes	Number	Rate	Causes	Number	Rate
Diseases of the heart	48,582	72.5	Diseases of the heart	67, 696	83.5	Diseases of the Heart	118,740	121.1
Diseases of the vascular system	37, 358	55.8	Diseases of the vascular system	51, 868	64.0	Diseases of the vascular system	68,325	69.7
Pneu-monia	35, 582	53.1	Malignant neoplasms	39, 295	48.5	Malignant neoplasms	53, 601	54.7
Malignant neoplasms	25, 399	37.9	Accidents	33, 966	41.9	Pneumonia	53,101	54.2
Tuberculosis (all forms)	24, 580	36.7	Pneumonia	32, 055	39.5	Accidents	40, 071	40.9
Acci-dents	13, 477	20.1	Tuberculosis, all forms	26, 771	33.0	Diabetes mellitus	27, 064	27.6
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and allied conditions	11,154	16.7	Symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical and laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	21, 363	26.3	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	23, 867	24.4
Other diseases of the respiratory system	6, 955	10.4	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	18,905	23.3	Tuberculosis, all forms	23, 216	23.7
Diarheal diseases	5, 759	8.6	Diabetes mellitus	14,196	17.5	Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis	14, 954	15.3
Nephritis, nephrotyc syndrome and nephrosis	5, 510	8.2	Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period	14, 122	17.417	Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period	10, 436	10.6

Source: Department of Health, <http://www.doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/publications/>

This double burden has strained the healthcare delivery system to its limits, exacerbating inequities in health care access and health outcomes from womb to tomb. One strong evidence is that despite claims of 100 percent coverage, based on a Primary Care Roadmap drafted by the Coalition for Primary Care and Universal Healthcare (2015) citing a 2013 *Acta Medica Philippina* journal article, only 33 percent of the poor are able to utilize their PhilHealth benefits, compared to 88 percent among the rich. Even more disturbing, also based on the Roadmap, is that 66 percent of deaths among Filipinos occurred while unattended by any healthcare provider. Clearly, inequities in accessing health services result in inequities in health outcomes. This has proved more fatal to poor Filipinos. Unless inequality is addressed, the diseases of poverty will persist.

The Philippines is in the midst of a health care crisis. But the change in understanding of health in the SDGs provides a glimmer of hope. The next three administrations until 2030 have the opportunity to fulfill the vision of the SDGs -- that through refocused progress and development, no Filipino will be left behind.

What are the obstacles in achieving the Health SDGs?

Given the experience and lessons from the MDGs, the new administration should take into account the following obstacles in achieving the SDGs: 1) lack of comprehensive health framework; 2) lack of and maldistribution of health human resources; 3) market-oriented health regulation; 4) weak and inconsistent people's participation; 5) administrative fragmentation; and 6) missed and misplaced priorities.

Lack of a Comprehensive Health Framework and interconnected response

Although, the lives of women and children matter, the focus on maternal and under-five mortality and on infectious diseases inadvertently neglected the rest of the population and existing co-morbidities, reduced the fight for health and well-being to a handful of diseases, and targeted particular services and commodities. The criticism on the MDGs on health is that it legitimized the selective approach to health, one that is time-bound, indicator-driven and with targeted investments, at the expense of a comprehensive health framework.

Given the limitations in resources and political terms of officials that ended in either 3 or 6 years, being selective seemed the more practicable approach. However, evidence shows that improvements in the health sector account for only 20 percent for the change in health status, while improvements in social conditions account for the larger 80 percent (Paterno and Herrera, 2013). Yet the selective approach prevailed. Across administrations, the Department of Health continued to push for universal health care only around the issue of universal health coverage through PhilHealth, instead of also aspiring for an *"equitable improvement of health outcomes through action across all relevant sectors"* (Schmidt, H., Gostin, L. O., & Emanuel, E. J., 2015, p. 928), as well as improvement of health outcomes through universal access to health services.

This narrow appreciation supports the prevailing curative, disease-driven, secondary and tertiary-level care model, which is highly reactive and less cost-effective. A more sustainable and effective model is primary, preventive and promotive health care, which not only provides basic health services on the ground, but takes into consideration the planning and building of communities, distribution of resources, and the participation of people in developing their communities and health systems. Alleviating poverty and combating inequality will be at

the core of this shift and it will challenge and unravel the intricate web of socioeconomic, geopolitical, cultural and health system factors that underpin the overall inequitable distribution of ill health, diseases and resulting deaths.

Addressing health outcomes need not be limited to interventions through health services. The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that almost all of the other 16 SDG goals will affect health outcomes. Factors such as food safety, security and sovereignty, and nutrition, land use and housing, water, energy, sanitation and hygiene, healthy occupational and environmental conditions, public transportation and other public services, access to health-related education and information, gender discrimination, culture, among others, directly and indirectly affect health outcomes.



In light of climate change and its exacerbating effect on natural disasters, health systems and communities need to be resilient, the response multi-sectoral and interconnected. A comprehensive health framework addresses the different development factors that determine health outcomes, and brings together the various stakeholders that comprise the health service delivery network and who are accountable in shaping the community.

Lack of and maldistribution of health human resources

In the Primary Care Roadmap by the Coalition for Primary Care and Universal Healthcare Study Group's, "Evolving Into a Universal Primary Care System," (2015) the workforce shortage is explained in detail. According to the document, 66 percent of Filipinos seek medical care from public facilities, especially true among the poorest, where public facility use is 89.6 percent. Unfortunately, of 66,000 physicians, 500,000 nurses and 74,000 midwives registered with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), only 3,000, 5,000 and 17,000, respectively, work

in a public facility as of 2013. This means that in many areas, for every 20,000 population, there are only ten healthcare workers - usually one physician, two nurses, and seven midwives. This number is paltry compared to the 50 per 20,000 threshold set by WHO, needed to address just the MDGs of maternal and child health. This estimate excludes health work force needed to address chronic, non-communicable diseases and other infectious diseases. This affirms the need for people who will care for people in achieving the SDGs. The inclusion in the development goals and targets of the health workforce who will deliver health services is long overdue.

Despite attempts by government to curb the workforce shortage through deployment programs such as the Doctor to the Barrios (DTTB) program, the impact on doctor-to-population ratios is minor (Coalition for Primary Care and Universal Healthcare Study Group, 2015). Furthermore, government needs to urgently prepare for and mitigate any impacts of the ASEAN Integration.. Although there are possible gains, the open borders should not mean further loss and maldistribution of health human resource in the country.

Market-oriented health regulation

The offshoots of current economic and development frameworks, policies and investments — such as migrant work, formula milk advertising and marketing regulation, sugar and tobacco control, land use and mining plans -- affect the health and well-being of Filipinos. When commercial determinants of health and profit-induced deaths, diseases and disability intersect with persistent and prevailing biases and discrimination against gender, age, income class, identity, ethnicity, race, location, among others, the combination for others may be fatal.

For example, the policy on facility-based delivery inadvertently created punitive sanctions against the indigenous communities such as withholding of subsidies for women who undergo home births. This implicitly measures indigenous culture and traditions, such as on health, pregnancy and childbirth, against existing global standards, without a proper and nuanced understanding of the role of culturally-appropriate and safe health practices in these indigenous communities. More so, underspending on research and development, particularly on outcomes and interventions that are not driven by profit, results in lost opportunities to harvest local endemic knowledge and practices.

Weak and inconsistent people's participation

When the community is consulted and informed and their input and insights are included in the final plans and programs, their participation in public health and health service delivery is enhanced. This brings health back in the hands of the people, their participation shifts from simply being clients to being leaders of health —taking responsibility for how their communities are built and shaped and demanding and working with government to make their communities healthier and safer. The Alma Ata Declaration requires that the needs of the people define health interventions, and that they should lead this process. Community-ownership of interventions on public health and health service delivery is especially important in geographically isolated and marginalized areas because it is the community that will sustain the programs. The members of the community are in the best position to mobilize local resources to address health concerns.

Initiatives that meaningfully consult girls, young women, and women on what interventions they need in order to change health outcomes such as rising unintended pregnancies

strengthens political participation and civic engagement. Making their own decisions about their bodies and the health interventions that affect their bodies is empowering, and shifts their role from passive beneficiaries to active agents of change. In Quezon City, the more than 300 young mothers aged 12-19 who were consulted by the local government proposed a 5-point solution requiring a multi-sectoral approach to averting the rise of unintended pregnancy amongst girls. .

In contrast, take the case of maternal mortality. The convergence efforts target mostly poor women, including adolescent girls, towards use of health facilities. The punitive sanctions on women who give birth at home is a quick fix that fail to take into consideration the invisible barriers faced by poor and vulnerable women. What it does is push these women further into the margins, strengthening distrust in the health institutions and weakening health-seeking behavior.

Administrative fragmentation

Although, the identification of key sectoral agencies and clusters responsible for the achievement and implementation of specific MDG targets and indicators enabled ease in management and accountability, it lacked a cohesive whole-of-government perspective that considered the link and ripple effect of decisions made in one cluster to the other. Take for instance the progress in ensuring access to adequate food and nutrition and to potable water, both critical to addressing under-five mortality. These are overseen by agencies working on agriculture, infrastructure and the environment, belonging to other clusters. Exclusive breastfeeding, proven to be a highly effective strategy to reduce infant mortality, is in need of a cluster of national and local government bodies to ensure formula milk regulation and breastfeeding uptake.

The MDGs were national government-driven. Unfortunately, the local government units, the frontliners in public health and service delivery, were informed late in the process. The varying levels of commitment, capacity or available resources of local governments determined their response.

It may be premature to say that devolution failed, however, incomplete devolution of administrative processes has resulted in fragmentation of health care services. The supply chain, in particular, has become splintered mainly because local spending for critical health inputs (e.g. human services) has become politicized, haphazard and insufficient. As a result, great discrepancies exist between national programs and local capacity to deliver, especially in underserved areas.

Majority of resources and regulatory powers still remain at the national level. Regional bodies have uneven capacities in enacting inter-local health resource mapping and sharing mechanisms that consider the impact of geography on development and vice-versa. For instance, regional bodies can provide a comprehensive assessment of the impact of a mining permit in one LGU on shared water systems and health outcomes across the neighboring LGUs. In addressing communicable diseases, LGUs still have to work together to understand the movement of people across communities, be it for employment or leisure vis-a-vis their health-seeking behavior. The same is true for ensuring access to potable water where water resources are shared across LGUs.

Missed and misplaced priorities

Measurement is the cornerstone of the MDGs. Policy and investments were shaped according to the globally agreed and nationally identified health outcomes.

Priorities are missed and misplaced when indicators are chosen on the basis of the difficulty of implementation or whether it can be delivered or not. It is important to use collectively identified indicators that the country truly needs to shape the health system and reach the desired health outcomes, difficulty to achieve notwithstanding. This means indicators directly and indirectly affecting health in the 16 other SDGs should also be considered. Also, the current focus on reactive or curative interventions to avert death, disease, and disability, measuring end-of-the-line indicators is easier, more convenient, but may be wasteful in the long run. Avoiding the more complicated, yet critical interventions which address the underlying and social determinants of health is counterproductive and will not make the most out of the SDGs.

Metrics that matter more

Commodities, financing, and infrastructure development may provide tangible outputs, but they failed to avert untimely and preventable mortalities and morbidities outlined in the MDGs. Focus on distribution and availment of commodities and number of people rather than the overall out-come diverted the attention from the root causes of infectious diseases.

The prioritization of health facilities also failed to take into account existing inequities such as access to food and nutrition, education, potable water, sanitation and hygiene, safe roads, energy, among others. More importantly, the increased numbers of facilities did not have the commensurate health workforce needed turning a number of them into white elephants. This, despite findings that increased investment in health facilities do not necessarily translate to decrease in mortalities and morbidities, particularly for women and children. Health care coverage, although measurable, does not immediately translate to utilization, which is an even more powerful indicator of access and participation. Despite mounting evidence that exclusive breastfeeding immediately after birth saves children's lives, the inclusion of EBF indicators still faces resistance due to difficulty in measurement and regulatory requirements.

The inclusion of adequate health human resources in the SDG targets, although notable, does not address the existing stop-gap measures of contractual or voluntary employment by both national and local governments. It cannot be overemphasized that as the gatekeepers of the health care system, their exhaustion because of indecent workloads can add barriers to access.

Data constraints

Missing data, the uneven, intermittent, and selective analyses, and failure to track progress gravely affects the understanding of the complete health picture across time. Planning on old, disparate data becomes problematic in the transition to the SDGs. Target and indicator revisions, such as in the case of antenatal visits, although well-meaning, have implications in assessing long-term progress. The absence of sound data may impinge on implementing more effective and appropriate interventions.

This is similarly true for SDG 3 with its 13 targets. Even the indicators of access to quality health care services which touch on communicable and non-communicable diseases, reflect a hodge-podge of data. While some are actual health outcomes— malaria or filaria-free provinces or deaths due to malaria, others are outputs or interventions completed—number of senior citizens immunized against influenza, provinces with non-communicable diseases registries, or cessation clinics established, or are clumped together such as in HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed and given treatment. Furthermore, critical health outcomes remain missing, such as access to skilled health personnel, despite the inclusion of annual targets on the number of health human resources deployed.

Poor health information system resulting in poor participation

The budget is the best articulation of a government's priority. Despite the crucial role of health information across all the building blocks of health, health information systems and technology development remains underfunded at 0.11 percent of the entire FY 2016 budget, among the low-est 20 allocations for budget line items.

This concern cannot be overemphasized. The DOH National Objectives for Health 2011-2016 clearly articulates that “the problems of completeness, accuracy, timeliness and access to health data, and fragmentation of various health information systems need to be addressed. Information systems that are managed separately by various data producers bring about inaccessibility of quality data for decision making. Critical to harmonization, interoperability and data exchange is an incessant multi-stakeholder collaboration among data producers and users with shared agree-ments and unified efforts towards increasing availability, access and use of timely, relevant and reliable health information.” In the absence of health information, evidence to support existing interventions can become arbitrary or profit-driven; worse, it weakens people's participation.

Recommendations:

The following policy interventions are recommended:

1. Review the mandate of the Department of Health, its associated agencies and bodies and local governments to ensure coordination, fill gaps, and address overlaps towards building a comprehensive health framework grounded on primary health care.
 - The Department of Agriculture together with the Department of Health should work closely together to address hunger and malnutrition. This means that nutrition and health outcomes should shape agricultural production towards food security and sov-ereignty, particularly at the community level.
 - The Food and Drug Administration should be an independent body, and the transition towards its fiscal autonomy be fast tracked. This ensures check and balance in the Philip-pine health institutions.
 - Health policies should be oriented towards the people and not the market. National Center for Pharmaceutical Access and Management (NCPAM) need to be independent from drug-procuring agencies to ensure check and balance.
 - Strengthen locally-driven responses, towards strengthening adaptive and resilient behavior from the LGUs. Grounded approaches allows immediate feedback from the communities and the people, owning and learning from their mistakes, implementing pilot programs to test innovative ideas, and gradual transitions to changes.

2. Increase investments in Primary Health Care towards achieving true Universal Health Care for all. Although increased national and local government investment in health is needed, effective and efficient spending matters more. According to the WHO (2009), "... 70percent of desirable health interventions can be delivered at the primary level, but an average of only 10percent of health resources are used for primary level care in Asia. Six countries in the Asia Pacific region [the Philippines included] spent less than 20percent on primary health care."
 - Use the health sector initiatives and allocation in the Budget of Expenditures and Sources of Financing (BESF) to account for all investments across government that affect health and well-being, such as on direct health service and drugs, roads safety, water and sanitation, electricity, community food production and school feeding, and other determinants of health.
3. Invest in Primary Care. The Coalition for Primary Care (2014) posits "About half of the deaths from NCD and the majority of infectious, maternal and newborn deaths are pre-ventable with proper healthcare. Unfortunately, the healthcare system has been unable to manage these scourges. This inability is the result of a chronic shortage and maldistribution of healthcare workers. The single most important building block of a health system is its health workforce" People caring for people is critical in achieving the SDGs.
 - The Coalition for Primary Care proposes a roadmap that includes funding sources for Universal Primary Care, towards a gradual transformation into a universal primary care system that is focused on improving access to healthcare - regardless of ability to pay. A primary care system functions on the principle that each citizen should have a personal healthcare provider. These primary care providers are the initial contact for most health needs of their patients and are responsible for providing holistic care for most health problems as well as helping patients navigate the healthcare system, advising when they need to be admitted or referred to a specialist; advising what services are available for free, which ones demand co-payment, and which ones entail out-of-pocket expenses.
4. Address the social determinants of health.
 - Encourage the strengthening of the Regional Development Councils, towards an integrated national and local health planning process that builds, protects and conserves shared resources.
 - Strengthen national and local health planning integration, with the regional and local bodies such as the local health board playing critical roles in implementation and regulation.
 - Integrate the slow onset and episodic impacts of climate change and natural disasters in planning and implementation.
5. Increase investment in strengthening people's participation.
 - Enact the Freedom of Information Bill into law.
 - Recognize and invest in the fundamental role of health information system in achieving the SDGs.

The SDGs is an opportunity for the Philippine government, and the other stakeholders to learn and address the prevailing issues on health. Ineffective and harmful interventions cost the Philippines time, money and premature loss of productivity due to death, disease, and

disability. Hope-fully, with its more comprehensive appreciation of health, the SDGs will see the rise of preven-tion rather than continued reign of curative health care.

The SDGs can be a game changer for health in the Philippines. In order to do so, a fundamental shift in health governance is required, one that is grounded on the needs of the people and their participation. This also means that the Department of Health is no longer the sole agency respon-sible for health; instead the critical role of the agriculture, environment, climate change, public works, and all the other government agencies and bodies at the national and local level that help shape the communities, are recognized. Nevertheless, DOH should lead the process and champi-on health outcomes as critical measures of national and local development.

Education 2030: No One Left Behind

By Rene Raya*

In September 2015, the UN General Assembly formally adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that included Goal 4 on education. This Goal articulates a clear commitment to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The new education agenda is certainly more ambitious and broader in scope than the MDGs and the Education for All (EFA). It consists of seven targets and three means of implementation that must be achieved by 2030. In November 2015, UNESCO further expounded SDG 4 and adopted the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA) with a set of thematic indicators in addition to the SDG indicators.

The new education agenda attends to the unfinished business of EFA while effectively addressing current and future challenges in education. To be sure, the Philippines made progress in education since 2000. While relatively slow and generally uneven, the country has improved participation and survival in basic education, reduced the number of out-of-school children, narrowed the gap in teacher, classroom and furniture requirements, and improved the learning achievement of students in both elementary and secondary levels.

In 2013, the Aquino administration took a critical step to strengthen basic education with the adoption of Republic Act 10533 or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013.” The centerpiece reform embodied in the new law is the shift to a 12-year basic education cycle, adding two years of senior high school to the current 10-year cycle. In addition, the “Kindergarten Act” of 2012 widened the scope of free, mandatory, compulsory education to cover one year of pre-school for all children aged 5 years, thus, the K-12 program. To a certain extent, the K-12 program reflects the aspiration of the new education agenda which calls on governments to ensure at least 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive and equitable quality primary and secondary education.

The EFA Scorecard

Notwithstanding all these, the country continues to face serious gaps and challenges in its education performance, failing to meet most of the EFA targets by the 2015 deadline. The Philippine Education for All (EFA) Review 2015 Report acknowledged the significant gaps in education access with only 75.3% of the relevant age group completing six years of primary schooling while millions of children drop out of school every year (DepEd, “EFA Review 2015”). Official statistics noted that of 100 children who started Grade 1 in 2004, only 68 survived to Grade 6 and only 47 reached year 4 (or the equivalent of Grade 10) in 2013. Some 9.7% or 6.7

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Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4

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

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.
- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.
- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.
- 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrollment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programs, in developed countries and other developing countries
- 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

million Filipinos aged 10-64 years old were found to be functionally illiterate in 2013 (PSA “FLEMMS”, p. 36). Quality remains poor and spending level remains low compared to the size of the economy and to actual needs despite the significant increases in the education budget in the last six years under the Aquino government.

Equity remains a serious concern given the persisting disparity in education performance and outcomes across income classes, ethnicity and geographical regions, with the poorest and most vulnerable groups left out in the march toward education for all. The resources invested in education and the political will to move forward fell short of the ambition articulated in the MDG and the EFA.

The Out-of-School Children and Youth

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that there were 3.249 million children 5-17 years old who were not attending school in 2013, the highest in the ASEAN region (See Table 1).

Table 1. Children 5-17 Years Old Currently Not Attending School by Age Group, Philippines (2009-2013 - In Thousands)

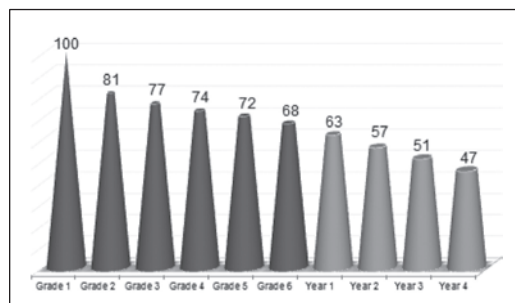
Age Group	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
PHILIPPINES	4,344	4,153	3,660	3,500	3,249
5-9 years old	1,646	1,477	1,175	909	812
10-14 years old	771	763	649	688	628
15-17 years old	1,927	1,913	1,836	1,904	1,809

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2013

Official statistics show that there has been no significant reduction in dropout rates among primary and secondary students in the last ten years, with dropouts especially high in the poorest regions of the country. Poverty is a significant factor contributing to high drop-out rates, and the consistent underfunding of the public school system worsens the situation.

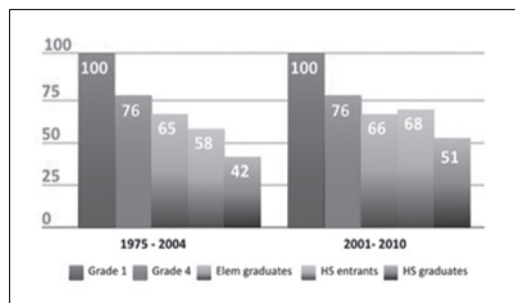
Among the country's 17 regions, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), with one of the highest rates of poverty incidence, also has the highest dropout rate. Based on reports presented by the Department of Education (DepEd) as mentioned above, a typical progression of a cohort of pupils shows that of 100 children who started Grade 1 in 2004, only 68 survived to Grade 6 and only 47 reached 4th year high school in 2013. The situation has stayed virtually the same compared to 2001-2010 and to the much earlier period of 1975-2004. The fallout in secondary level schooling has in fact increased with only 47 of 100 reaching year 4 in 2013 compared to the 51 who were secondary or high school graduates during the period 2001-2010. (DepEd, "Basic Education")

Figure 1. Typical progression of pupil cohorts (Grade 1 to Year 4), 2004-2013



Source: Department of Education

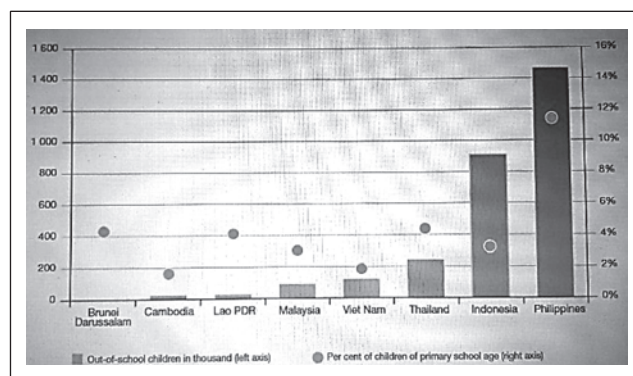
Figure 2. Comparison of cohort survival between 1975-2004 and 2001-2010



Source: The State of Basic Education: Gaining Ground, March 28, 2012, The Tower Club, Makati City

The Philippines has one of the biggest numbers of out-of-school children in the Asian region. In a co-publication of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) released in 2014, the Philippines ranked the highest in the number of out-of-school children in 2012 among 8 ASEAN countries, even higher than that of Indonesia with a population double that of the Philippines. (See Global Monitoring Report, Statistical Annex Table 5, pp. 352-359)

Figure 3. Comparison of numbers of out-of-school children in primary school age among some ASEAN countries, 2012



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, cited in ILO and ADB "ASEAN Community", 2014

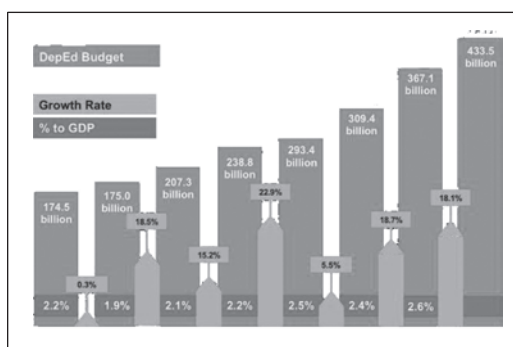
Poor Quality of Education

The quality of basic education, particularly at the secondary level, has remained consistently low. Overall performance in the National Achievement Test shows that students are learning only half (54% in 2013) of what they should have acquired at the appropriate level of schooling. The 2013 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) shows that less than half (48.6%) of elementary graduates are fully literate – can read, write, compute and comprehend a short simple paragraph. Worse, only 59.5% of Filipinos who reached high school level of education are fully literate (PSA "FLEMMS", Table D3 p. 39). The persisting backlogs in teachers and classrooms are key factors that impact negatively on student learning. Teachers are among the lowest paid professionals in the country today. Low pay, job insecurity through contractualization, large class sizes, and inadequate in-service training and opportunities for professional growth affect teacher motivation and competence.

Low Government Spending

The budget of the education department more than doubled during the six-year term of the Aquino Government, increasing from P175 billion in 2010 to P433.5 billion in 2016. (DepEd 2016 Briefer) (See Fig. 4) Despite the increase in nominal spending for education, government expenditure level in relation to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has remained consistently low at less than 3%, way below the UNESCO benchmark of 6% of GDP. The Philippines is one of the lowest education spenders in Asia and the least per pupil spender in the ASEAN region. (UNESCO Institute of Statistics)(See Table 2)

Figure 4. Department of Education Budget from 2010-2016



Source: Department of Education

Table 2. Public expenditure per pupil as a % of GDP per capita, 2008-2013

	Average	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Indonesia	15.6	11.9	10.7	24.2
Malaysia	32.6	17.1	19.9	60.9
Philippines	9.3	9.0	9.1	9.7
Singapore	17.2	11.2	17.0	23.4
Thailand	31.7	38.3	37.4	19.5
Viet Nam	32.6	25.3	N.A.	39.8

Source: Unesco: List of latest data available varies per country

What is particularly distressing is that the budget allocation for programs that cater to poor and disadvantaged groups, including the out-of-school, remains virtually unchanged at less than 1% of the total budget for basic education. (SWP, ABI) In comparison, the allocation for subsidies to private schools under the Education Service Contracting (ESC) program has increased significantly during the previous administration (from Php 2,568 million in 2009 to Php 5,852 million in 2014), indicating a clear bias towards privatization. (General Appropriations Act, 2009-2014)

The shift to K-12 carries with it greater pressure on financing to meet the requirements for additional classrooms, facilities, equipment and trained, experienced and competent teachers. While the concept and rationale for the shift to a 12-year basic education cycle is clear, the main concern is on preparation or the lack of it, specifically the financing component for senior high school and the massive displacement particularly among grade 10 completers coming from poor families and remote rural areas. In addition, a significant number of tertiary level teachers will potentially be either laid off or demoted as they are forced to shift from college to high school teaching, owing to the expected low number of incoming tertiary level students during the transition phase that will take at least six years. While contingency measures have been adopted by both the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and DepEd, these are not sufficient to address the expected displacement.

DepEd public schools cannot absorb all Grade 10 completers who will pursue senior high school. Around 400,000 students or approximately 40% of Grade 10 completers in the public sector will be shifted annually to non-DepEd schools starting 2016. Problems in proximity and affordability, and lack of facilities in private schools will displace a significant number of students, preventing them from pursuing schooling and completing basic education.

The Challenges and Risks of Privatization of Education

Successive governments have manifested a clear preference for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) that leads to further privatization of education in the country. The previous administration looked at PPP as a “cornerstone” development strategy and put forward clear legal provisions and plans promoting private sector involvement in education. (EO No. 8)

The last two decades witnessed the significant growth in the coverage of the Education Service Contracting (ESC), a PPP scheme in education mandated by law that provides public

subsidies for students enrolled in eligible private schools. The scheme allows private schools to charge top-up fees to cover the difference between the subsidy and the fees charged by the schools. Considered as one of the world's largest and longest-running PPP in education, the ESC program was further expanded beginning 2010, targeting one million student grantees every year with corresponding increases in subsidies and budget allocation.

The World Bank review of the ESC show that the program does not reach the poor as was envisaged. Most ESC grantees come from relatively well-off families due to the top-up fees that are way beyond the capacity of the poor to pay. IBRD/WB, p. 3) Private schools also tend to select better performing students to reflect well on their academic standing. In effect, the poorest are left out in low performing and poorly financed public schools.

As part of the K-12 financing strategy, the Aquino Administration introduced a similar scheme to cover incoming senior high school students through a Voucher Program. Without covering the full cost of private schooling and without clear guarantees on admission, the program systematically discriminates against the poorer, the lower performing and the rural-based students.

Another step taken by the government favoring the private sector is the agreement signed in 2013 that allowed the operation of the Affordable Private Education Centers (APEC), a chain of commercial schools established as a joint venture between Pearson PLC Corporation, the largest global education conglomerate, and the Ayala Group, one of the largest corporations in the Philippines. These schools operate in cramped spaces in rented commercial buildings with poor ventilation, and without the required facilities and campuses, in violation of existing regulations governing private schools. Yet, the government opted to accommodate the operation of these schools with limited restriction by relaxing a number of regulations. APEC and its corporate shareholders intend to capitalize on an overburdened and under-resourced system by selling for profit education services at nominally low fees but on a massive scale through the voucher system. (EI, pp. 3-4)

The private education industry has become one of the most lucrative industries in the Philippines in terms of revenue to cost ratio, ranking second based on the 2010 government survey of industries. The high revenue margin is true for all levels of education, with secondary education having the highest revenue to cost ratio. (Survey of Business and Industry, 2010) The introduction of voucher program for senior high school also encouraged the emergence of low-cost private schools and corporate chain schools, but without the necessary regulatory framework. The accommodation given by the government for the operation of APEC schools indicates a clear bias towards the unregulated commercialization of basic education.

What can be Done?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the important role of education as a main driver of development and as an essential goal for the success of all SDGs. Education is, thus, included under several other SDGs, notably those on health, employment, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change. In line with the mandate of the Philippine Constitution on the right to free basic education, and the vision of the SDG to ensure equitable inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning for all, the following recommendations are proposed.

No One Left Behind

The new education agenda's focus on inclusion and equity underscores the need to intensify efforts aimed at reaching the marginalized, excluded and vulnerable sections of the population, ensuring that no one is left behind.

We cannot simply do more of what had been done in the past and pursue the same business-as-usual programs in education. We must address the fundamentals and be consistent with the goals and targets articulated in the SDG agenda. The MDGs failed to address inequality. There is evidence to show that income inequality widened even more in most countries, which left billions of people poor and hungry, lacking in basic literacy skills, without decent jobs and access to basic services, and with no voice and participation in political processes and policy making that affect their lives. We need to address the social, economic, and cultural barriers that perpetuate poverty, inequality, discrimination and exclusion. The targets under SDG4 must be translated into clear policies, strategies and actions at the national level, ensuring that these reflect and capture the ambitions laid out in the new education agenda.

Equity is clearly and strongly articulated in the goals and targets of the new development agenda as a whole, including SDG 4, which all emphasize inclusion, equality, equity, non-discrimination, and respect for all human rights regardless of gender, age, economic status, location, race, ethnicity, language, religion, disability, caste, and residency status. These are critical cross-cutting concerns that run through all SDG targets. Progress is best achieved if the poorest, the most excluded and other disadvantaged sectors of society are able to catch up, move forward and achieve the SDG targets. To achieve this, clear policies must be adopted and affirmative action taken with a clear bias for those who are left behind.

Investing in Education

The full realization of the Education 2030 agenda requires sustained, innovative and public spending on education, taking into consideration the context and actual needs of the Philippine education system. The government must allocate the maximum available resources to meet all education targets with clear spending priorities to reach out to those left behind, specifically the out-of-school children and youth, and adult illiterates, those who failed to complete basic education and acquire the basic skills, and all other disadvantaged groups. While increasing domestic resources through meaningful reforms to make taxation progressive, and by ending harmful tax incentives accorded to big businesses and preventing tax evasion, the government must further ensure that funds for education are not lost to corruption and inefficiencies.

Consistent with SDG4 and the mandate of the Philippine Constitution, the government should mobilize adequate resources to ensure 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive and equitable, quality basic education. The budget for education must be increased further to meet the international benchmark of at least 6% of GDP share and 20% of the national budget earmarked for education. Programs that cater to the out-of-school children and youth, to the hard-to-reach communities, and to other disadvantaged groups must be enhanced with corresponding increments in their budget allocations. These programs refer specifically to the alternative learning system (ALS), IP education, Madrasah, and learning programs for persons with disabilities and children in especially difficult circumstances. Financing specifically for senior high school must be scaled-up to ensure equity in the implementation of the K-12 program and effectively address the displacements especially among the poor and excluded.

Citizens' participation in the local and national budgeting process must be institutionalized to strengthen transparency and accountability.

Privatization of education, including most public-private partnership arrangements, discriminates against the poor, exacerbates inequality and promotes segregation based on socio-economic status, gender, location, and learning abilities. The government must adopt clear and effective regulatory framework and enforce regulations on private sector engagement in education that will ensure non-discrimination, equity, and fulfillment of the right to education. A transparent review of the ESC program, the SHS voucher program, and the APEC schools must be conducted and necessary measures taken to ensure equal access and equity, and the fulfillment of the right to education.

Ensuring Quality Education and Teaching

Quality education is yet another critical concern highlighted under SDG 4 - ensuring that all children and youth learn and acquire relevant knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to live and participate meaningfully in social, economic and political activities in a rapidly changing world amidst the challenges of persisting poverty, widening inequalities, and environmental challenges. The new agenda is inspired by a vision of education that is transformative, innovative and empowering. Education is meant not only to acquire a fixed set of academic competencies, but also to develop social awareness, critical thinking, and leadership, and to promote democracy, human rights, gender equality, global citizenship, peace and social justice. In this regard, it is important to monitor the extent by which SDG 4.7 on global citizenship education and education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in the national education policies, curricula and learning materials, teacher education, and student assessment.

Quality also has to do with relevance, and it is important especially for the youth, that the education outcomes translate into decent work and productive livelihoods in industries identified as strategic in the national development plans as well as local community development plans. Along this line, there is a need to localize and contextualize the education curricula in a participatory manner that involves all stakeholders in the communities, ensuring that corresponding indicators are developed to monitor the extent to which schools are able to do this contextualization.

Teachers are key to ensuring quality and meeting all of the SDG education targets. The equity gap in education is exacerbated by the shortage and uneven distribution of professionally trained teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas. The government should ensure adequate, qualified, professionally trained, motivated and empowered teachers, educators and learning facilitators and make teaching an attractive profession by allocating adequate resources for their training, welfare and professional development. Concrete steps must be undertaken to achieve the full implementation of the Magna Carta for public school teachers, respecting their rights and ensuring adequate compensation, benefits, job security, professional growth and the well-being of all teachers.

Good Governance and Participation

The public education system must be strengthened to ensure quality, inclusive and equitable education and learning opportunities for all children, youth and adults. This can be done through adequate public financing and through transparent and participatory governance



of the education system, including the management of schools and learning institutions. The local school boards, school governing councils and child protection committees should be strengthened with the active participation of civil society and all stakeholders in education.

Freedom of information and full disclosure policies must be adopted and practiced to promote a culture of transparency, participation and accountability, and allow ordinary citizens and organizations access to all information without need of any bureaucratic procedures and permissions. This is the starting point for any meaningful participation of civil society and all education stakeholders in policy-making processes. The marginalized sectors, children and youth, and those left behind must be well-represented and must be in policy-making bodies and processes at national, local and school levels.

Civil society must be given greater space for meaningful contribution in the formulation of the national education sector plan that is consistent with the SDGs and in the development of the indicator framework and the implementation of the monitoring system at national, local and school levels. Alternative reports should be encouraged and supported to get the perspectives of civil society actors, and to provide spaces for meaningful participation of and input from disadvantaged groups, particularly women, youth, elderly, ethnic minorities, PWDs and other marginalized sectors of society. There should be spaces for contesting official reports so that civil society monitoring and analysis can be heard and considered in global and regional platforms that will be created to monitor the implementation of the SDGs.

Linkages and Networking

Education and literacy have shown strong linkages and impact on other development concerns, including health, poverty eradication, income and employment, mobility, fertility, environmental protection practices, disaster mitigation, gender equality, appreciation of cultural diversity, peace, human rights, child protection, and political and community participation. Education is the most powerful means of achieving gender equality, of enabling girls and women to fully participate in decision-making, in community affairs and in economic and political activities. Education is also one of the most potent ways to improve child health and nutrition. It is also a key instrument for rebuilding lives and communities that have been devastated by crises and conflicts. In this regard, the education community must link with other sectors, consult one another, and draw up a common cross-cutting agenda on overall development that is coherent and complementary, and which ensures equity and social justice.

End Notes

¹ Millennium Development Goals 2000-2015 consisting of 8 goals

² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

³ (Basic Data from Department of Budget and Management (DBM)).

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Women's Human Rights and Access to Justice of Women in Marginalized Sectors

*By Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau, Inc. (WLB)**



1. Where we are

Good score, top performer

The Philippines scores well on international gender equality measures and indices. We have consistently ranked among the top ten countries in the world in gender equality. The Philippines has been included in the top 10 since 2006 in the Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum. In 2015, it placed 7th making it the highest-ranking country in Asia and the Pacific. In the 2015 Human Development Index Report, the Philippines landed in Group 1 and among the countries that scored highest in the Gender and Development indicator.

The Philippine government has consistently projected itself as one of the countries supportive of human rights. It has taken a leading position in promoting women's rights and gender equality, especially in Southeast Asia. The Philippines has demonstrated stronger *de jure* compliance to its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) compared to other members of the ASEAN.

* Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau, Inc (WLB), is a feminist legal non-government organization that has pioneered feminist legal advocacy and development in the Philippines. WLB works in solidarity with women and progressive social movements to influence justice systems and create legal reforms, strengthen CSO and women's participation in the local, national, and international levels, and promote women's human rights and access to justice.

In 1981, the Philippines ratified the CEDAW, legally committing itself to uphold non-discrimination and substantive equality. As State Party it pledged to respect, protect, promote and fulfill women's human rights before the international community and the sovereign Filipino people.

Over the years, the Philippine Government has formalized policies to uphold this commitment. In 1995, the Philippine Government created the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development (PPGRD) of 1995-2025. The PPGRD laid out the government's assessment of the problems in attaining gender equality and specified the basic goals and strategies to achieve national development. In 2013, the Philippine Commission on Women launched the Women's Empowerment, Development and Gender Equality Plan 2013-2016 or Women's EDGE Plan to make the commitments in the PPGRD more concrete for the period 2013-2016.

Several laws promoting women's rights were enacted. Many of them guarantee protection from different forms and acts of violence against women. Two comprehensive women's rights laws have been passed by the Philippine Congress. The first, the Magna Carta of Women of 2009, the first of its kind in Asia, enables local and national implementation of CEDAW. The second is the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law of 2012 that provides for comprehensive sexual and reproductive health rights of Filipino women.

These results could not have been realized without the struggle of the community of feminists, activists, women's rights advocates, NGOs and people's organizations, and progressive social movements in the Philippines. Much work still needs to be done to correct structural inequalities and systemic discrimination against women.

De facto inequality, limited access to justice by marginalized women

Conditions of poverty and social injustice, deeply entrenched in Philippine society, impedes the realization of women's human rights. In reality, Filipino women remain economically, politically and socially disadvantaged compared to men. About 22.3 million Filipinos in 2012 remained poor, sharing only about 6.8 percent of the total income of the country, whereas the top 20 percent of families shared in 46.8 percent. (IBON qtd. In Philippine NGO Report on Beijing+20) Today, more than 10 million Filipino women live in poverty, many of them found in rural and indigenous communities.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports that only 45 percent of working-age women are able to access decent and productive employment compared to 72 percent of men. Wages that men receive in the agricultural sector are higher by 20 percent than those women receive. Women are not recognized as food producers and have very limited access and control over agricultural and land resources.

It is therefore not surprising that from 2010 to 2015, half of the total number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) are women (see Table 1). They seek employment opportunities abroad,

Table 1. Distribution of Overseas Filipino Workers by Sex (Number in thousands)

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Female	1,250	1,170	1,141	1,072	1,032	975
Male	1,197	1,149	1,154	1,148	1,126	1,068
Total	2,447	2,319	2,295	2,220	2,158	2,043

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, *Statistical Tables on Overseas Filipino Workers*, www.psa.gov.ph

many of them ending up in undervalued and precarious work. Illegal recruiters, human traffickers, and more recently, drug networks and syndicates exploit their vulnerabilities.

Implementation of laws and policies is slow and uneven. In fact, the recent Philippine NGO Beijing +20 Report concludes that “...state policies have resulted in worsening poverty, inequality, hunger, joblessness, vulnerability, and insecurity” (UP Center for Women’s Studies 8).

Despite the Magna Carta of Women’s emphasis on protection and fulfillment of the rights of marginalized groups of women, many of them continue to be neglected, ignored and directly discriminated in services and by the policies of the government. Data on the conditions and needs of women in marginalized sectors – such as women living with HIV, LBT women, migrant women, women with disabilities and women domestic workers— are often lacking, if at all available. The lack of data on marginalized groups of women hinders a more definitive understanding of their conditions and needs, and how development initiatives have made impacts on improving their lives and fulfillment of their rights.

Persistence of violence against marginalized women

The recent National Household Demographic Survey (2010) reports that 1 in 5 Filipino women or an estimate of 4.6 million have experienced physical and sexual violence since age 15. Again it must be noted that government data specifically on violence against women in marginalized sectors are not available. Alternative sources, however, cite data and many instances of violence against LBT, women with disability, and indigenous women.

Women who identify as lesbians, bisexuals or transgender (LBT) are more vulnerable to acts of violence committed by male family members, acquaintances, and strangers. The threat of rape is constant. They experience psychological, emotional, physical and sexual violence, and material deprivation at an early age, often as a means to ‘correct’ their ways. These acts later result in lack of access to employment and social protection as they have fewer and limited opportunities to pursue development. (Galang, qtd. In Phil. CEDAW Shadow Report)

The Philippine Coalition on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reported 168 cases of rape of deaf women from 2006 to 2012, while their review of Supreme Court cases on persons with disabilities from 2008 to 2011 showed that 20 percent of these were gender-based violence cases filed by women and girls with intellectual disabilities. (Phil. NGO Report on Beijing+20) Women and girls with disability are subjected to ridicule and re-victimization when they try to access remedies for the violation they have suffered. They are burdened with having to provide for interpreters or assistants during court trials, or enduring insensitivity of the courts assigning male interpreters who lack training and sensitivity in handling cases of violence against women with disability.

Similarly, the government proved to be inept in responding and providing remedies to violence against indigenous women. Problems of access, lack of facility and security risks in geographically isolated areas remain largely unaddressed. Indigenous women, even when they try to seek remedy from the State, are faced with biased legal actors. The situation becomes even more complex with some customary laws, which may constrain indigenous women’s full enjoyment of their rights.

Limited Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)

The Supreme Court struck down several provisions of the reproductive health law critical to meet the purpose of addressing teenage pregnancy in the country and empowering women and

communities to uphold sexual and reproductive health rights. Consequently, the law requires women to seek the consent of their male spouses in accessing reproductive health procedures and prohibits minors from availing of modern methods of family planning without parental consent.

It has not helped that government, despite claims of giving families a full range of options, over- privileges natural family planning methods over modern contraception. The Supreme Court issued temporary restraining order on the procurement and dissemination of specific contraceptive products. The Congress slashed the budget of the Department of Health intended for purchase of family planning and contraceptive products, effectively inhibiting poor women from accessing basic birth control methods. Indeed, the reproductive health law languished in Congress for more than a decade because politicians tried to accommodate the unfavorable sentiments of the conservative and fundamentalist sections of Philippine society on contraception and sexual health education. Furthermore, a number of local government units did not only make information on SRHR unavailable and inaccessible but they also prohibited free distribution of contraceptives in government health units, violating the reproductive health law itself and the government's commitments to the CEDAW.

Although there may have been improvements in terms of increasing health insurance coverage for maternity and new born care for identified poor households or indigents, government programs, if not all, only provide limited maternal health care and fail to address the comprehensive sexual and reproductive health needs of marginalized women. There are no laws or programs ensuring and promoting reproductive rights of LBT women. Women living with HIV AIDS are discriminated against, as many health units and health service providers refuse to attend to their needs. Misguided policies prohibit teenage girls from HIV testing without parental consent.

In response to the government's thrust to reduce maternal mortality, several local government units passed ordinances prohibiting home-based deliveries and penalizing traditional birth attendants found to have performed home-based deliveries. These have resulted in discrimination against women as government continue to fail to address the disincentives in accessing public health services. Indigenous women's complaints of discrimination, evident in inadequate support systems, mistreatment by culturally insensitive health workers, the general lack and remoteness of facilities, and the lack of financial resources to afford these services is well-documented.

Many policies control women migrant's sexual and reproductive behaviors. Employers and receiving countries compel women to undergo pregnancy tests and HIV screenings. If found to be pregnant or HIV positive, they are unilaterally terminated and deported, barring them from accessing immediate reproductive and health care services they may need. Women migrant workers lack access to contraceptives and maternal health care. Migrant women with irregular status are at a greater risk because they refrain from accessing preventive programs and other support services for fear of deportation. (WLB, 2015, p. 39)

Lack of access and control over resources

The Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK) reports that the gender equality guidelines for land acquisition and distribution failed to create an impact. There was not much opportunity to implement policies to ensure equal titling of lands and valuation of women's work in the agricultural sector because the policies were enacted when the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) was about to end. Women were not recognized as beneficiaries

of the CARP program, notices of coverage were not issued, and in some areas, the provincial agrarian reform officer dismissed the claims of women as rightful agrarian reform beneficiaries on the basis of “them not being able to plow the fields”. (PKKK, 2016, p. 12)

Corporate and large-scale mining severely impacts the lives and communities of indigenous women. It has greatly limited food production and income generation as forests and farmlands are cleared. It has resulted in massive displacement of communities, contamination of land and water resources that indigenous and rural women rely on. It has destroyed critical biodiversity areas in the country. (WLB, CWG, 2016, p. 15) Rural women have claimed that small-scale mining operations are similarly destructive. (PKKK, 2016, p. 12)

Mining companies have taken over subsistence farms and agricultural lands. When food is inadequate, women tend to forgo their share to ensure that their children are fed. Opportunities of indigenous and rural women to earn in mining areas are also severely limited. In many occasions, the only opportunities available to them are undervalued care and reproductive work. Some are pushed to enter into prostitution. (Franciscan International et.al., 2016, p. 5-6)

Generally, Filipino women lack access to livelihood and income opportunities. The Philippine Commission on Women notes the prevailing gender segregation in the country, where men are found in construction and transportation industries and women in the service sector, education and health industries. Furthermore, it has observed that women are more likely to be unpaid workers in home-based production and in the agricultural sector. (PCW, 2014, p.6)

Women and disasters

The severity of the impact of disasters on women is a manifestation of the lack of substantive equality and discrimination they face. Policies, programs, and interventions are based on faulty analysis that disasters are gender-neutral phenomena. The \$2 billion government budget for response and rehabilitation of Haiyan-affected areas has only one project that clearly articulates an objective to address the needs of women: the Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition program.

One of the reasons why women are invisible in government interventions is the lack of, and sometimes total absence of data, disaggregated by sex and other forms of marginalization such as their disability status, ethnicity, migrant status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Because interventions are not sensitive to the differential impact on women, they exacerbate the burden that women already bear. They are expected to keep the remaining members of the family together, ensure source of food and other basic supplies for the family, ignore their own needs, and perform tasks assigned -- which are traditional roles of caregiving in evacuation camps and community projects -- without adequate support.

Women with disabilities, particularly with mobility-impairment cannot line up to avail of relief goods or other services. Indigenous women, too, are excluded from aid efforts because they are not registered in local government units.

Cases of violence against women are not monitored in times of disasters. In most cases they are forgotten or are often addressed the last in government’s relief and rehabilitation efforts. Many reports claim that trafficking in women and girls increase immediately after disasters as perpetrators take advantage of massive displacement of families and communities.

Women’s sexual and reproductive health concerns are typically deprioritized. Marginalized women endure risks of complications and death due to lengthy transit and inadequacy of facilities. Women with disability have reported discrimination by health workers as they cast “judgement on pregnancies and [show] inappropriate curiosity about patients’ private parts”. (W-DARE, 2016)

Post-disaster rehabilitation efforts tend to focus on male-dominated livelihood sectors. PKKK's findings show that assistance such as boats and fishing gears in Marabut and Salcedo were all given to men, none to women. Such assistance also tends to focus on capture-fishing and not on fish processing where women are more involved. (PKKK, 2016)

2. Obstacles in fulfilling Women's Rights and Access to Justice

State's failure to address structural inequality

The Government's de jure compliance with its obligation to protect and promote women's human rights has not resulted in lasting impacts on gender equality for women in marginalized communities. Women's issues are not taken seriously. Social institutions perpetuate bias against women's sexuality as a means to gain control. Women's varied experiences are systematically excluded in law and in many of the government's programs and development interventions. State actors and institutions continue to fail to recognize the serious nature of violence against women (VAW) and discrimination against women.

Systematic discrimination against victims of sexual violence permeates the Philippine judicial system. The persistence of discrimination has produced more stigmatization, re-victimization and denial of justice to women.

Multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination hinder women's access to justice. There is no palpable appreciation of what it means to be a woman in a patriarchal society, belonging to indigenous groups, living with disability, who perhaps is a lesbian, bisexual or transgendered, subject to male-privileging laws and policies, living in rural areas, economically disadvantaged, caught in uncertainty of disasters, with little access to basic services to begin with.

Programs and interventions are not well-coordinated. Many basic services are devolved and subject to prioritization of local government units and agencies, which are often captive to conservative interests. There is no systematic monitoring and data generation that may paint a conclusive picture of what has been achieved by government programs.

Significant challenges lie in coordination, enforcement and full implementation of laws, policies and development programs and measures necessarily must go beyond legal reforms to address the patriarchal roots of the many challenges and problems women and communities face.

Deeply-entrenched stereotypes, myths and misconceptions about gender and women's sexuality

Myths abound on women's sexuality and gender bias and discrimination characterize the legal process. Prevailing attitudes, lack of understanding, insensitivity and incompetence of duty bearers inhibit full and proper implementation of laws. In other cases, duty bearers are complicit in or are themselves the direct perpetrators of discrimination and violence against women.

Problems of re-victimization in the legal process, trivialization of abuse, persistent economic barriers, incompetence and neglect of state actors especially in the legal system, corruption in many levels of the government all contribute to the perpetuation of many forms of discrimination against women.

Laws, policies and programs often emanate from positions that privilege standards of the male gender. This has resulted in interventions that are disempowering and discriminatory to women, especially those in marginalized sectors.

Sexuality is predominantly seen through heteronormative lens, systematically discouraging behaviors and identities that are non-heterosexual. As a result, lesbians, bisexual and transwomen are excluded in development interventions.

Furthermore, there are measures that cause more harm to women. Instead of protecting them from exploitation, there are laws and policies that reinforce stereotypes of women as victims, subdue their agency and the capacity to express sexuality, and undervalue their pursuit of and contributions to national and community development.

Poor interventions to raise consciousness and awareness on women's human rights

There is barely an effort to implement wide-scale and systematic intervention on awareness on women's human rights. Lack of awareness of women about their rights, laws, programs and services, especially those whose rights have been violated, is well-documented. Legal literacy, though provided for in law, is not made part of the mandate of strategic state institutions. Even among academic institutions, there persists resistance to integrate and implement SRHR of women and girls (Philippine NGO Report on Beijing+20, p. 161)

Gender-sensitivity seminars, and generally gender mainstreaming efforts, have not resulted in significant changes in attitudes of large sectors of society. Many of these efforts are removed from the lived realities of women in marginalized sectors.

3. Recommendations

Strengthen women's movements

Changing the attitudes, biases and perspectives of society on discrimination requires a sustained effort from many fronts and sectors of society. There is a need for continued advocacy on women's issues and women's rights. The integration of women's issues in the academe and education sectors, and ensuring positive portrayal of women by media are concrete and immediate steps in eliminating culturally entrenched gender bias and discrimination.

There is a need to look further into the interplay of politics, economics, and culture to achieve full realization of women's human rights. Measures should always adhere to principles of participation, affirming women's agency and their capacity to be active seekers of social justice and development. Building, encouraging, and developing vibrant communities of women with critical awareness on their rights is a major step towards ensuring full realization of women's rights.

Strengthening organizations, alliances, and collaboration among marginalized sectors ensure that efforts build towards addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that women in marginalized communities face. A serious attempt to fulfill rights of marginalized women entails a genuine interest in various ways that they deal with justice and development issues surrounding them.

Strengthen substantial and procedural legal responses to discrimination against women

Justice and legal systems have the power to embody, alter, and entrench social norms that may either limit or expand opportunities for women's legal empowerment. There is an immediate need

to enact laws that will provide remedies for violations of rights of women in marginalized sectors. Laws that constrain women's freedoms must be repealed, whether customary or mainstream.

Review and amend the laws and policies, particularly to rectify discriminatory provisions. Women may successfully access justice when norms and standards are rendered in text and interpretations that are non-discriminatory and more enabling of their rights.

Simplify the process to access available legal remedies for violence against marginalized groups of women. Government actors must decisively protect women victim-survivors. Enforce the Views of the CEDAW Committee in relation to the cases filed using the Optional Protocol (KTV).

Guarantee access to accurate information on women's sexual and reproductive health rights. Abolish policies that inhibit enjoyment of the full range of family planning and birth control methods. Review and amend laws in order to address the needs of women in marginalized sectors.

Strengthen political commitment to promote women's rights and ensure women's access to justice

Mainstream women's access to justice in the development agenda across all levels of government. Implement policies and programs penalizing discrimination against women but also put stronger measures in place to prevent the same. This could involve massive and successive consciousness-raising initiatives for grassroots women and men in communities.

Systematically gather data on marginalized groups of women. Investigate and report on their situation, privileging their lived experiences. Conduct a systematic gender audit of all major government programs to evaluate how these have addressed the marginalized women's concerns of unpaid labor, multiple burden, economic subordination, lack of participation, and violence against women.

Enforce due diligence of duty bearers to correct infractions of the law and create ones that will enable better exercise and claiming of rights. It means continued legal reforms to make processes more gender-responsive. Similarly, economic measures which are already provided for in the Magna Carta of Women and supported by the CEDAW should be implemented by all government agencies concerned. This means effective distribution of land, resources and wealth.

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Energy planning in an era of low-cost renewables: Ensuring a coal-free future within a few years

By Roberto Verzola*

The Philippine Energy Plan 2012-2030: a remarkable document

As early as 2013, it was already possible to ensure a coal-free future in Philippines. The programs needed to attain this goal were already right there in the Aquino administration's Philippine Energy Plan 2012-2030 (henceforth, PEP 2012). PEP 2012 (Figure 1) was published by the Department of Energy as the official energy plan of the Philippine government. Had the government taken seriously the specific targets of two PEP 2012 components — the Philippine Energy Efficiency Project (PEEP) and the National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) — the country would have been able to meet all new electricity demand with 100% renewable energy, within a short period.

This, in turn, would have removed the need for any fossil-fueled power plant in the country's energy plans for the future.

Unfortunately, the combined impact of the PEEP and the NREP were not seen in this light by the Philippine government. No energy official apparently made the connection. Thus the remarkable conclusions lurking within the PEP 2012 have remained hidden and unappreciated until now.

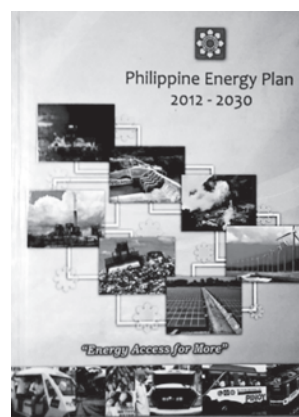


Fig. 1 The remarkable PEP 2012-2030

It only takes some pencil-pushing

Our conclusions above can be easily established, using government's own figures, numbers and targets given in the PEP 2012. To do this, we need to determine the following

A. *Lower, more energy-efficient demand projections, 2012-30.* Given the PEP 2012 business-as-usual demand projections, we will apply the PEEP target to generate new demand projections, which will be lower because they are more energy-efficient.

B. *New required reserves, 2012-30.* From these new demand projections, we will use the government's own formula to calculate the required reserves.

C. *New required supply capacity, 2012-30.* The energy-efficient demand projections plus the required reserves will give the required supply for the planning period, that is, from 2012 to 2030.

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D. *Baseline capacity as of 2011.* The dependable installed capacity plus committed projects as of 2011 will give the baseline capacity as of 2011.

E. *New required supply capacity additions, 2012-30.* The required supply minus this baseline capacity gives the new additions to supply capacity that the government must actually plan for.

F. *Planned RE-only additions, 2012-30.* If these additions, exclusively from Renewable Energy (RE) are less than what is required, then 100% RE for the new demand is not yet feasible. But if the former exceeds the latter, then the idea of meeting new demand with 100% RE is feasible. This means we can exclude fossil-fueled power plants from our energy planning for the future.

Now, the details.

A. New, energy-efficient demand projections: BAU projections minus PEEP targets

PEP 2012 gives a “reference scenario”, its projection of the country’s business-as-usual (BAU) electricity demand for the specified period. This scenario projects an expected BAU demand of 23,158 MW by the end of the planning period in 2030. (See Table 1)

Table 1. Business-as-usual (BAU) demand projections in MW, 2012-2030

Year	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	Philippines
2012	7,969	1,568	1,407	10,944
2013	8,275	1,643	1,484	11,402
2014	8,575	1,723	1,567	11,865
2015	8,892	1,799	1,657	12,348
2016	9,217	1,884	1,731	12,832
2017	9,567	1,976	1,809	13,352
2018	9,929	2,060	1,891	13,880
2019	10,304	2,147	1,978	14,429
2020	10,693	2,237	2,068	14,998
2021	11,165	2,331	2,164	15,660
2022	11,659	2,430	2,264	16,353
2023	12,174	2,534	2,368	17,076
2024	12,712	2,644	2,478	17,834
2025	13,274	2,759	2,592	18,625
2026	13,860	2,881	2,712	19,453
2027	14,473	3,008	2,838	20,319
2028	15,112	3,142	2,969	21,223
2029	15,780	3,283	3,106	22,169
2030	16,477	3,431	3,250	23,158

Source: Department of Energy, PEP 2012-30, Figs. 44-46, pp.96-97.

The Philippine Energy Efficiency Project or PEEP (PEP 2012, 144-149) trims down the growth of electricity demand. The PEEP target is 200 MW savings per year (PEP 2012, 144). The project intends to attain this mostly by distributing CFLs to the residential sector. Assuming that the project had been attaining its goal since 2013 and would continue to do so until 2030, then this would reduce the government’s BAU demand projections by 200 MW per year, to arrive

at an energy-efficient demand growth scenario for the Philippine power sector (Table 2). For example, for the year 2030, the calculated energy-efficient demand should be 19,558 MW.

Table 2. Philippine demand and supply scenarios, 2012-2030, MW

Year	Demand Scenario		Required Supply	
	BAU	Efficient	BAU	Efficient
2012	10,944	10,944	12,676	12,676
2013	11,402	11,202	13,152	12,944
2014	11,865	11,465	13,634	13,218
2015	12,348	11,748	14,136	13,512
2016	12,832	12,032	14,639	13,807
2017	13,352	12,352	15,180	14,140
2018	13,880	12,680	15,729	14,481
2019	14,429	13,029	16,300	14,844
2020	14,998	13,398	16,892	15,228
2021	15,660	13,860	17,580	15,708
2022	16,353	14,353	18,301	16,221
2023	17,076	14,876	19,053	16,765
2024	17,834	15,434	19,841	17,345
2025	18,625	16,025	20,664	17,960
2026	19,453	16,653	21,525	18,613
2027	20,319	17,319	22,426	19,306
2028	21,223	18,023	23,366	20,038
2029	22,169	18,769	24,350	20,814
2030	23,158	19,558	25,378	21,634

Source: Author's calculations, based on government figures and formulas

Note that while the BAU scenario shows a year-on-year increase averaging 4.25%, the energy-efficient scenario averages only 3.28%, clipping nearly 1% from the projected average annual growth rate in electricity demand.

B. New required reserves: 4% of demand plus 1,294 MW

It is not enough to supply as much electricity as the demand for it.

Based on Philippine electricity regulations on grid reliability (PEP 2012, 98)., the government requires each grid to maintain a supply capacity that is higher than the demand by the following amounts:

- a frequency regulation reserve (FRR) of 4% above the demand;
- a dispatchable reserve (DR) equal to the size of the most heavily loaded generator (647 MW for Luzon, 100 MW for the Visayas, and 105 MW for Mindanao); and
- a contingency reserve (CR) of the same amount as the DR

C. New required supply capacity: projected demand plus required reserves

Adding the 4% FRR, plus the 647 MW DR and another 647 MW CR gives us our new supply targets for the period 2012-2030 under an energy-efficient growth scenario (See Table 2, last column). The final supply target by 2030 is 21,634 MW during peak demand.

D. Baseline supply: existing dependable capacity plus committed capacity

The next important piece of information we will take from PEP 2012 is the amount of installed capacity (in MW) as of the start of the planning period (See Table 3).

Conservatively, we will be using not the 16,266.9 MW of installed capacity as of 2011, but only the 14,477.04 MW which were considered “dependable”. Of these dependable capacity, 4,477.54 MW (30.93%) were renewable, while 9,999.5 MW (69.07%) were fossil-based. This mix of existing RE and non-RE power plants will be taken as given.

Table 3. Installed and Dependable Capacity in MW, 2011

Plant Type	Philippines			
	Capacity (MW)		Percent Share (%)	
	Installed	Dependable	Installed	Dependable
Coal	4,916.60	4,650.80	30.42	32.13
Oil Based	2,994.11	2,578.70	18.53	17.81
Natural Gas	2,861.00	2,770.00	17.70	19.13
Geothermal	1,847.69	1,433.87	11.03	9.90
Hydro	3,490.73	2,963.47	21.60	20.47
Wind	33.00	33.00	0.20	0.23
Solar	1.00	1.00	0.01	0.01
Biomass	82.76	46.20	0.51	0.32
TOTAL	16,226.90	14,477.04		

Source: PEP 2012-2030, p.86

In addition to these existing plants, PEP 2012 lists some 19 proposed projects that had earlier been initiated and were already under construction. As of 2011 (Table 4), these committed projects had a total capacity of 1,766.7 MW, of which 210.7 MW (11.89%) were renewable and 1,556.0 MW (88.11%) were fossil-based, mostly coal.

Together, this dependable capacity (14,477.04 MW, 30.93% RE) plus the committed projects (1,766.7 MW, 11.93% RE) comprise our baseline supply—the supply capacity we will take as given. This total baseline supply is 16,243.74 MW (28.86% RE).

E. New required supply additions: required supply minus baseline supply

The required supply (C: 21,634 MW) minus the baseline supply (D: 16,244 MW) gives the new additions that the government must actually plan for: 5,390 MW. Under the country’s Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) of 2001, the government can only act on this, not by building the power plants themselves, but by creating favorable conditions to encourage the private sector to do so.

Table 4. Committed Power Projects, as of 2011

Grid	Project Name	Capacity (MW)	Target Completion	Location	Proponent
Luzon	CIP 2 Bunker Fired Power Plant	21.00	Q4 2012	Bacnotan, La Union	CIP II Power Corporation
	Green Future Biomass Project *	13.00	January 2013	Isabela	Green Future Innovations Inc.
	Puting Bato Coal Fired Power Plant Phase I	135.00	September 2014	Celeca, Batangas	South Luzon Thermal Energy Corporation
	2 x 300-MW Mariveles Project	600.00	Unit 1 (300MW) December 2012 Unit 2 (300MW) January 2013	Mariveles, Bataan	GN Power Mariveles Coal Plant Ltd. Co.
	Maibarara Geothermal Project	20.00	October 2013	Sto. Tomas, Batangas	Maibarara Geothermal Inc.
	Pililla Wind Power Project*	67.50	2013	Pililla, Rizal	Altenergy Wind One Corporation
	Payatas Landfill Methane Recovery and Power Generation Facility*	1.20	December 2012	Quezon City	Pangea Green Energy
	9.9-MWe (net) SJCI Power Rice Husk-Fired Biomass power Plant Project*	11.00	December 2014	San Jose, Nueva Ecija	San Jose City I Power Corporation
Sub-total Luzon		868.70			
Visayas	2 x 135-MW Concepcion Coal-Fired Power Plant	270.00	Unit 1 3Q 2014 Unit 2 Sep 2016	Concepcion, Iloilo	Palm Thermal Consolidated Holdings Corp.
	Nasulo Geothermal Plant	20.00	December 2013	Nasujl, Valencia, Negros oriental	Energy Development Corporation
	Villasiga HEP*	8.00	December 2012	Sibalom, Antique	Sunwest Water & Electric Co. Inc.
	Cantakoy HEP*	8.00	Q4 2014	Danao, Bohol	Cantakoy Hydroelectric Power Project
	Asian Energy System Biomass Project*	4.00	December 2015	Cebu	Asian Energy System Corp.
Sub-total Visayas		310.00			
Mindanao	2 x 4-MW Cabulig Mini Hydro Power Plant*	8.00	Operational	Jasaan, Misamis Oriental	Mindanao Energy Systems, Inc.
	15-MW Diesel Power Plant	15.00	2013	Iligan City	Mepalad Energy Generating Corporation
	15-MW HFO Peaking Plant	15.00	Q4 2012	Tagum City, Davao Del Norte	EEL Power Corporation
	2 x 150-MW Coal-Fired Therna South Energy Project	300.00	2014	Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur	Therna South Inc.
	Mindanao 3 Geothermal	50.00	2014	Kidapawan, North Cotabato	Energy Development Corporation
	2 x 100-MW Southern Mindanao Coal	200.00	2014	Maasin, Sarangani	Sarangani Energy Corporation
Sub-total Mindanao		588.00			
Total		1,766.70			

Source: DOE, PEP 2012-30, p.94

Table 5. The government's planned RE additions, 2012-2030, MW

The National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) has set aggressive targets for capacities to be generated utilizing various renewable energy (RE) resources in the country. As indicated in the Table, PhP 612.10 billion will be needed for the development of RE resources to provide an additional estimated capacity of 8,240 MW over the entire planning period. The preparatory activities for the development of hydro projects comprise 98% of the total RE investment cost at PhP 598.87 billion. Further, PhP 8.70 billion will be required for biomass projects, PhP 2.35 billion for geothermal

SUMMARY OF RE INVESTMENT REQUIREMENTS		
Renewable Energy Resources	Capacity (MW)	Investment Requirements (Million PhP)
Hydropower*	4,752.94	598,870.44
Biomass	52.40	8,695.67
Geothermal*	1,165.00	2,346.21
Wind*	1,915.00	1,561.26
Ocean*	70.50	493.50
Solar*	284.05	134.69
Total	8,239.89	612,101.77

*Pre-Development Cost

Source: PEP 2012, p.164

F. The government's planned RE additions

Let us now look at the government's renewable energy program, to see whether it is sufficient to meet the new supply capacity that must be added.

The planned RE additions under the government's National Renewable Energy Program (NREP) will reach 8,240 MW by 2030, broken down in Table 5 above (PEP 2012, 164). Clearly, the government's RE-only program already exceeds the new required supply additions of 5,390 MW. Even if we excluded, for the sake of argument, the variable (solar and wind) and the experimental (ocean), this still leaves 5,970 MW, more than enough—with 580 MW to spare—to cover the required supply additions for the planning period.

While PEP 2012 provides RE targets for the final year of the planning period, the full details of the government's RE program are provided in a separate official document, the electronic version (in PDF) of which is identified as the "NREP Book" and posted at the Department of Energy website. The NREP Book breaks down the government's 2011-2030 RE targets into five-year intervals.

The author has also analyzed these five-year targets and arrived at a similar conclusion: the RE-only additions are enough to cover the supply requirements every five years, until the end of the planning period.

This is truly a remarkable result! It means that if the Philippine government's energy efficiency and renewable energy targets were all on track, all additional energy demand for the period 2012-2030 would have been met by renewable energy sources alone.

This remarkable conclusion lurking within the government's energy plan has an equally awesome implication: it means that the country does not need to include any new fossil-fueled (and nuclear) power plants in its electricity supply planning.

The door could have been finally closed on these dirty, harmful and increasingly expensive technologies.

It did not happen

Unfortunately, this scenario did not materialize in the first four years of the plan under the Aquino administration. The RE additions were far below target, and the government went instead on a construction binge of more than 40 coal power plants. Despite demand from RE operators for higher targets, energy planners kept applying the brakes on RE expansion, while pulling out all stops to coal construction.

Thus, the country today finds itself in a bizarre situation of locking itself to coal technology for the next 30 years or so, a technology that is going to be increasingly more expensive compared to renewables like solar and wind, while promising to the world to cut down its carbon emissions by 70% of the business-as-usual scenario by 2030.

Some 40 years ago, President Marcos insisted on a nuclear power plant even as negotiations made it more and more expensive. Similarly, President Aquino insisted on scores of coal plants, even if it was increasingly clear that these plants were going to produce more expensive electricity in the future.

Conventional wisdom poses two major objections to the RE-only scenario for new demand:

- 1) It will raise the retail price of electricity, a major concern of consumers.
- 2) Solar and wind have variable outputs and are expensive. We need baseload plants—typified by coal- and nuclear-fueled plants—to keep the grid stable and electricity rates low.

The retail price of electricity went down, not up, due to renewables

The conventional wisdom that renewables raise the price of electricity might have been true several years ago, but it is not true anymore.

A one-year study (Nov. 2014 to Oct. 2015) of the country's feed-in-tariff (FIT) system by Jonathan dela Viña of the Philippine Electricity Market Corp. showed that, because renewables tended to replace the more expensive fossil-fueled peaking plants that only come online during periods of peak demand, renewables in fact brought the average price of electricity down.

The FIT system is part of the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 (RA 9513). It sets (through the Energy Regulatory Commission) fixed rates to be paid to qualified RE plant operators. These FIT rates vary per technology, but are typically higher than the average cost of generation, the difference representing the premium that the government (through the ERC) was willing to pay, to encourage private investments in RE. To pay this premium, the law adds a universal charge (initially, four centavos per kWh, also set by the ERC) to every utility consumer's electric bill. In effect, every consumer of electricity pays an extra charge to encourage private investments in RE.

Over the one-year period covered by the PEMC review, renewables actually saved the consumers a total of P4.04 billion, or P0.0567/kWh. (Macapagal, 2016; Lectura 2016) This is what PEMC found:

Table 6. The PEMC findings

Consumer savings due to lower bill	P8.29 B	
FIT charges paid by consumers	P4.26 B	P0.0406 per kWh
Net consumer savings from RE	P4.04 B	P0.0567 per kWh

Source: dela Viña, as qtd by Macapagal (2016) and Lectura 2016)

Thus, although the feed-in-tariff (FIT) system collected P4.26 billion from consumers to pay renewable plant operators, these plants displaced the output of more expensive natural gas- or diesel-fed peaking plants, bringing down the average price of electricity and saving consumers a total of P8.29 billion, for a net gain of P4.04 billion. In effect, the FIT charges can be considered an investment; it was forced on consumers, but it earned them a 94.8% (4.04 divided by 4.26) return on investment, which is not a bad deal at all.

Because the prices of renewables keep dropping, we can expect even greater savings in our electric bills in the future.

The conventional wisdom in energy planning needs an overhaul

Except for an enlightened few, most of the current crop of energy planners in the country still cling to the old conventional planning wisdom that is focused on power plant categories called "baseload", "midrange" (or "mid-merit"), and "peaking".

Baseload plants provide a steady output non-stop, 24/7, except when under maintenance. Shutting these plants down and then bringing them up to full capacity again may take several days to a few weeks. Peaking plants can be shut down or brought up to full capacity in a matter of hours or even minutes. The midrange plants lie somewhere in between.

We are now entering a new energy era, however, which is marked by the increasing deployment of a new type of power plant that is neither baseload nor peaking.

The zero-marginal-cost power plant

Typified by solar and wind power plants, this new type of power plant is the zero-marginal-cost renewable plant. Because of their inherently variable output, these plants are often referred to by modern planners as variable renewables. To stay relevant in this new energy era, our energy planners must overhaul their own thinking, junk the old conventional wisdom about baseload plants, and learn to deal with this new type of power plant.

Variable renewables like solar and wind are increasing in importance for several reasons:

1. They rely on essentially inexhaustible energy sources, enabling countries and localities to enjoy better energy security;
2. They generate electricity in a relatively clean and climate-friendly way, in contrast to the harmful emissions of fossil- and nuclear-fueled power plants;
3. They use no fuel and therefore enjoy very low running costs (in economic terms, they are zero-marginal cost plants).

And because power plants are put online based on “merit order”—the lowest marginal cost plants first and the highest ones last—solar and wind plants enjoy “priority dispatch”. In an era of cheap renewables, the low-marginal-cost output from variable renewables will get higher priority than the high-marginal-cost output of baseload fossil-fueled plants. This is why solar and wind power plants have been increasing in importance, as the cost of building them have gone down.

The output of variable renewables cannot be controlled—the sun may be covered by passing clouds or the wind may stop blowing. Thus, a second type of power plant also becomes essential in the new energy era.

The flexible power plant

The flexible power plant is one whose output may be ramped up or down under operator control very quickly, in a matter of minutes or even seconds. Flexible power plants today include gas turbine plants, biomass plants, hydroelectric plants, batteries and other emerging storage technologies.

A single wind turbine will provide a variable output depending on changes in wind speed and direction. A single refrigerator acts as an intermittent load, as its thermostat turns the compressor motor on or off in response to temperature changes. When a large number of sources and loads are interconnected, however, the abrupt changes in the individual components of the grid are evened out, resulting in slower and smoother variations in power availability and consumption throughout the system.

Nonetheless, the combined output of solar and wind plants connected to the grid is weather-dependent and therefore inherently variable, although improved forecasting methods may reduce the unpredictability of these inherent variations. Similarly, the overall demand for power from the grid is also inherently variable and to a significant degree weather-dependent too.

The supply and demand for power must remain equal at all times. Small departures from this equilibrium will lead to gradual overheating of equipment and electrical lines. If big enough, they can cause protective devices to trip, disconnecting sources or loads from the grid and causing grid instabilities and power outages.

The role of flexible plants is to ramp up or down their output and shape the total on-grid power output. The goal is to ensure near-instantaneous tracking of the total on-grid demand.

The micro-scale power plant

Another way to deal with the variability of solar and wind is to deploy thousands, even millions, of small units that generate their output at the kilowatt level. At this scale, the problem of variability can be much more easily handled because it becomes statistically predictable. On the demand side, most of the loads on the grid are in fact micro-scale, mitigating the intermittency of most air conditioning, refrigeration and industrial loads.

This micro approach has an even more important consequence. It can also activate economies of scale—as can already be observed in the solar PV sector—which can further bring down the cost of renewables and possibly launch virtuous cycles of increasing production and declining prices similar to those which earlier triggered the computer, telecommunications and information revolution.

In an era of cheap renewables, power plants which have neither flexibility, low marginal costs, nor micro-scale outputs—like coal-powered plants—will have very little role to play. A country like the Philippines that, at the threshold of this new era, locks itself in to such an outdated technology will saddle itself with dirty and increasingly expensive plants that will eventually have to be phased out much earlier than their designed lifespans.

The baseload capability to maintain steady output 24/7—as a coal or a nuclear power plant does—will not be a major asset in the new energy era. In the first place, a fixed output can be easily simulated by combining variable plants with a flexible plant that evens out the crests and troughs in the variable output, to achieve a steady combined output. More importantly, a fixed output in itself is incompatible with demand on the grid, which varies significantly over a 24-hour period. Thus, a baseload plant needs a flexible complement as much as zero-marginal cost variable plants like wind or solar.

Unfortunately, today, the outdated baseload concept persists as a mindset not only among energy planners but also among academics who critique the government's energy plan. Because these critiques are still based on the baseload concept, they continue to reserve a place in the electricity mix for power plants that can provide steady output 24/7—ensuring a significant share in the electricity mix for coal, if not nuclear.

“Negawatt” power plants: energy-efficient electrical devices

A fourth type of power plant will play a significant role in the coming era. This type is, strictly speaking, not a power plant at all. The power it generates is measured in “negawatts”, or megawatts saved rather than produced. It does make sense, however, to think of LED lamps and inverter-type airconditioners and refrigerators as power plants, because by reducing the amount of power that goes to waste, they then make this power available for other uses as if they had produced this power themselves.

A huge body of literature can be found on the Web on energy efficiency and demand-side management (DSM), an aspect of energy planning that was pioneered by physicist Amory Lovins.

In essence, this approach involves the deployment of technologies that provide the same level of energy service while using less electricity. An investment in the technology therefore retains the same level of service—whether it is the amount of lighting or the temperature reduction required—while resulting in permanent power savings. The power saved (the “negative watts”) can then be used to provide other energy services, as if the power had been generated in a power plant.

Thus, the levelized cost of electricity (LCOE) from such energy efficiency measures as shifting to LED lighting or to an inverter-type airconditioner can also be calculated and compared with

supply-side measures that involve actually building a new power plant. And invariably, it turns out, the energy efficient demand-side approach costs lower than the supply-side approach. It is almost always cheaper to save electricity by making more efficient use of it, than to generate more electricity by building new power plants.

In more concrete terms, we can think of what happens when we replace a 75-watt incandescent lamp with a 15-watt LED lamp at a cost of, say, 300 pesos. There will be a saving of 60 watts every time the lamp is turned on, throughout the lifetime of the lamp. If the lamp is good for 5,000 hours, this means 300,000 watt-hours (300 kWh) saved. Given the 300-peso investment, this means one peso per kWh saved, which is far lower than the 8-12 peso per kWh retail price of electricity in the Philippines.

It is also important to distinguish between energy-efficiency measures such as replacing an incandescent with an LED lamp, and energy conservation campaigns such as switching the lights off in unoccupied rooms and similar behavioral changes in the consumer. Investing in a campaign to change consumer behavior may result in similar low-cost savings per kWh. However, we are not sure whether the behavioral change attained will last for five years, five days, or anything in between. Thus investments in such campaigns have to be evaluated carefully, to determine how cost-effective they really are compared to measures with provably longer-lasting impacts.

Mid-day peaks are generally caused by airconditioning loads, and night-time peaks by lighting loads. Thus energy-efficient lighting, airconditioning and solar rooftops all have a significant role to play in reducing peak demand and the need to build new power plants.

The energy infrastructure of the future

The grid of the future will rely mainly on four types of energy sources:

1. The low/zero-marginal cost plants that require no fuel, which will supply the bulk of our electricity at very low cost;
2. The flexible plants, whose outputs can be varied quickly and under control, to shape the total supply output in sync with the requirements of demand and to ensure balance within the system between supply and demand;
3. The micro-scale plants, with outputs in the kilowatt rather than megawatt range, which will bring in the benefits of distributed generation and enable ordinary citizens to participate in the great energy transition not only as consumers but also as producers of renewable electricity themselves; and
4. Energy-efficient devices which make available cheap power by harvesting power that would otherwise be lost in inefficient and wasteful devices.

Energy efficiency, solar, wind, and—soon—power plants driven by ocean waves or tidal currents will comprise the low/zero-marginal cost infrastructure, which will ensure that consumers of the future will enjoy the benefits of electricity at a low cost.

Hydro and biomass will provide the flexibility that will ensure grid reliability by providing a total supply that is equal to the demand at all times. As energy storage technologies become commercially viable, they will play an increasingly bigger role in providing flexibility in grid supply.

Solar and wind farms and mega-hydro projects may be renewable, but each installation will cost hundreds of millions, if not billions, of pesos. These projects can only be undertaken by huge business firms or the national government, and the only role that the ordinary citizen can play in these project is as buyers of electricity.

Rooftop solar, microwind, microhydro and small biogas plants will make distributed generation a practical reality. They will enable the ordinary citizen to participate in the renewable energy revolution not only as consumers but as producers of electricity themselves. Cheap solar panels and inverters are already making the household generation of electricity affordable today. Things will even be better in the future, as solar prices continue to drop and if similar economies of scale take effect in the microwind and microhydro sectors.

Just as microcomputers sidelined the mainframe, and cellphones sidelined the landline, micro-generation through solar, wind, hydro and biogas plants may eventually sideline the big power generation companies and transform the grid in a fundamental way.

The grid will not by any means disappear, because interconnectivity brings inherent advantages compared to stand-alone operation, as the Internet clearly shows. But its nature will change. Most households will in the future become empowered to generate their own electricity. They will use the grid mostly to share their excess production (to sell it, to accumulate credits for later use, or possibly even give it away just as people freely give away information on the Internet), or to buy some if their production is not enough. They should be able to choose the source of the electricity they are buying—a friend with an extra-large set of solar panels, or a community-run microhydro installation.

Under such a scenario, our society will get better in extracting cheap, clean electricity from renewable sources and from otherwise wasted energy.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which the Philippines committed to achieve by 2030, includes Goal 7: to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. It is recommended that government takes these two innovative approaches seriously in national planning for the electricity supply, so that we can all hopefully begin to enjoy the promise of energy security, energy democracy and energy abundance that respect people's health, the environment and the climate.

The first approach is to adopt an intermediate goal that is focused on new supply requirements, taking the existing and committed supply capacities as given. In the context of the Philippine Energy Plan 2012-2030, it turns out that applying this approach would have resulted in a remarkable conclusion: the government's own energy efficiency and renewable energy targets are more than enough to supply all new demand with 100% renewable electricity. Had the government worked really hard to attain these energy efficiency and renewable energy targets, there would have been no need—since 2013—to build new fossil-fueled power plants.

The second approach is to leave behind the outdated concept of baseload plants, and focus instead on new types of power plants that are more appropriate in the new energy era: zero-marginal cost plants, flexible plants, micro-power plants, and negawatt plants.

The incoming Duterte administration need only to embrace these two approaches to make a giant step towards the transition to a sustainable, renewable energy future.

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Sustainable Economy and Decent Work

*By Jessica Reyes-Cantos**

All 17 of the SDGs are arguably difficult to achieve, but having an economy that sustainably grows, that is inclusive, provides full, productive and decent employment, combined with climate resilient communities would, by and large ensure that all the other 16 SDGs are likewise met. We are all aware, however, that we have not a moment to spare when we consider that 2030 is the target year. It took Malaysia 33 years to triple per capita income to \$11,120 and reduce poverty by 0.6 percent. From 1981-2014, our own GNP per capita only grew 1.8 times to \$5,000. (Esguerra, 2016) Yes, committing is easy. Getting there can be really tough.

Where we are

There is wide recognition that there was higher economic growth under the Aquino Administration, driven by higher government investments and expenditure, the domestic economy, sustained growth in the services, particularly the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector, and the ever reliable remittances of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

In a forthcoming paper entitled “Economic Transformation, Equality, Resilience: Challenges for the Duterte Administration and Beyond” by Atty. Nepomuceno Malaluan of the Industrial



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Policy Team of Action for Economic Reforms (AER-IP), the data and analysis generated are indicative of a growth that is not inclusive nor does it carry the promise to create sustained gainful employment. Below are some of the data from the paper:

Table 1. Average Weighted GDP Growth Rates and Share Contribution of Expenditure Items to GDP Growth (in Percent)

Item	Weighted Growth Rates, Average for Years Indicated		Share Contribution to GDP Growth, Average for Years Indicated	
	GMA, 2002 to 2008	Aquino, 2011 to 2015	GMA, 2002 to 2008	Aquino, 2011 to 2015
I. Household Final Consumption Expenditures	3.51	3.98	68.12	67.75
II. General Government Consumption Expenditures	0.29	0.67	5.59	11.42
III. Gross Domestic Capital Formation	0.56	1.78	10.82	30.28
A. Fixed Capital Formation	0.81	1.74	15.61	29.72
B. Changes in Inventories	-0.25	0.03	-4.80	0.56
IV. Net Exports	0.80	-0.84	15.48	-14.28
A. Exports of Goods and Services	3.01	2.03	58.29	34.64
B. Less: Imports of Goods and Non- Factor Services	2.21	2.87	42.81	48.92
VI. Statistical Discrepancy		0.28		4.83
Gross Domestic Product	5.16	5.87	100.00	100.00

Source of basic data: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

Note: Table 1 (above) and Table 2 (right) are derived from a paper entitled "An Assessment of the Economic Performance of the Administration of Benigno S. Aquino III" by Dr. Joseph Anthony Lim, Action for Economic Reforms – Industrial Policy Team. Dr. Lim chose to exclude 2009 as it would be unfair to attribute the near-zero growth rate to the Arroyo Administration because that was the year of the Great Recession worldwide. Furthermore, since 2010 is split between the Aquino and Macapagal administrations, the high growth during that year cannot be claimed by either.

Table 2. Average Weighted GDP Growth Rates and Share Contribution of Economic Sectors to GDP Growth (in Percent)

Item	Weighted Growth Rates, Average for Years Indicated		Share Contribution to GDP Growth, Average for Years Indicated	
	GMA, 2002 to 2008	Aquino, 2011 to 2015	GMA, 2002 to 2008	Aquino, 2011 to 2015
I. Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry	0.51	0.19	9.83	3.18
II. Industrial Sector	1.50	2.10	28.99	35.81
A. Mining and Quarrying	0.11	0.03	2.05	0.54
B. Manufacturing	0.98	1.55	19.04	26.43
C. Construction	0.24	0.40	4.62	6.87
D. Electricity, Gas and Water	0.17	0.12	3.28	1.97
III. Service Sector	3.16	3.58	61.18	61.01
A. Transportation, Storage and Communication	0.62	0.47	12.01	8.01
B. Trade and Repair of Motor Vehicles, Motorcycles, Personal and Household Goods	0.90	0.99	17.41	16.88
C. Financial Intermediation	0.42	0.54	8.23	9.12
D. Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	0.63	0.85	12.14	14.56
E. Public Administration and Defense; Compulsory Social Security	0.13	0.13	2.59	2.15
F. Other Services	0.45	0.60	8.81	10.28
Gross Domestic Product	5.16	5.87	100.00	100.00

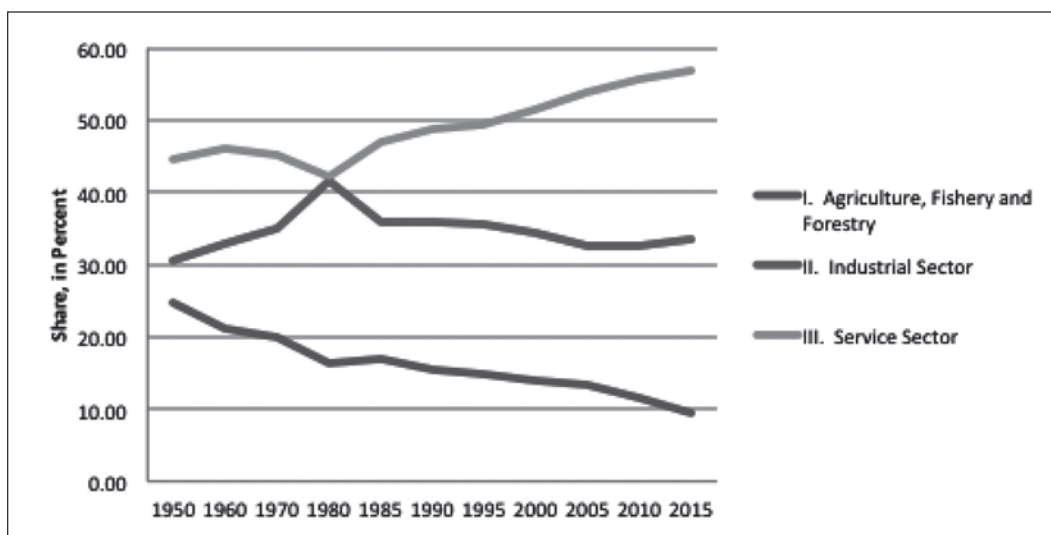
Source of basic data: *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*

From the above, we can discern that the export and agriculture sectors have been the laggards. Had it not been for their dismal performance, our growth would have been much higher. Agriculture's performance further underscores why growth has not been inclusive: most of the poor are from that sector.

Weak link between Agriculture and Industry

To liberally quote the AER-IP paper cited earlier, “(T)he economy has so far been unable to deliver an economic transformation towards a strong industrial sector (of which manufacturing is the main subsector). Not only did the industrial sector stagnate, it even declined in terms of its relative contribution to the country’s GDP. In 1980, the share of the industrial sector to total GDP stood at 41.6 percent. In 1985 it was down to 35.9 percent and remained around this level before declining since the second half of the 1990s. In 2015, its share in GDP stood at 33.5 percent.” (See Figure 1) (Malaluan, 2016, p. 7)

Figure 1. Share in GDP, by Sectoral Origin



The paper adds, “(T)he importance of being able to grow a robust industrial sector lies in its higher productivity and output value, and consequently, higher returns to inputs including labor. A growing industrial sector also promotes transformation within agriculture, by assisting technological upgrading and facilitating agriculture-industry linkages.”

Employment is not a Guarantee out of Poverty

Recent data and analysis by the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) reinforces the analysis that the kind of employment that was being created does not automatically move the poor out of the poverty trap. The graphs below are quite telling.

Figure 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: January 2015 (excluding Region 8)

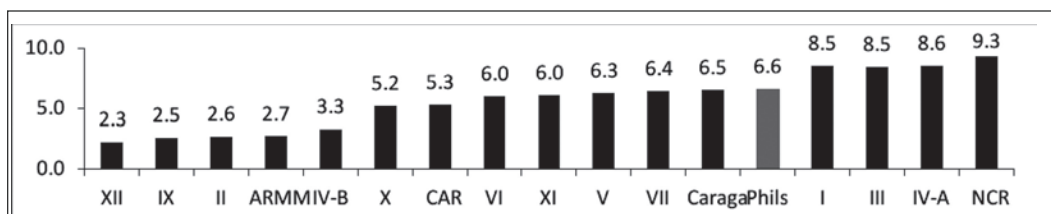
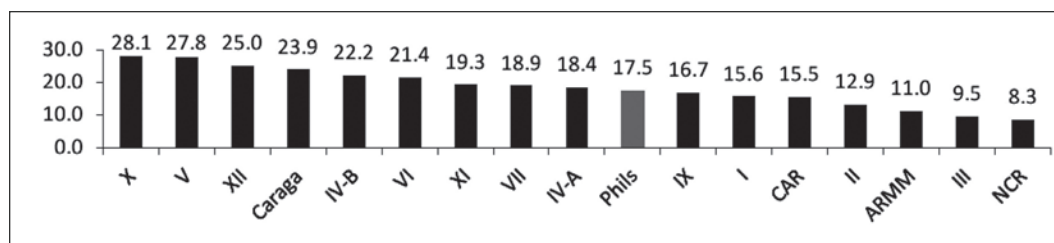


Figure 3. UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE: January 2015 (excluding Region 8)



In regions where we know majority of its population are poor is where we find unemployment rates that are below the national average. Yet, in seven out of the 12 regions whose unemployment rate is below the national average, underemployment is most pervasive. These are regions 4-B, 5, 7, 10, CARAGA, 11 and 12.

Youth unemployment is as real as it can get. In April 2014, DOLE reported that half of the 2.9 million unemployed belong to the 18-24 age bracket. (Corrales, 2014)

Climate risk aggravates existing binding constraints

Admittedly, inadequate access to education and health services, lack of adequate infrastructure especially in rural areas, access to irrigation, water, electricity and extraction beyond the limits of our resources' carrying capacity are now known constraints faced by the poor. What further aggravates their risks, particularly among farmers and fisherfolks, is that now they have to contend with climate change.

No less than Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture (BFAR-DA) Undersecretary Asis Perez admitted that the fishery sector actually brought down the performance of the whole agriculture sector, as there was a real decline in fish catch. Why? Simply, our waters are already overfished.

Typhoon Yolanda, the most devastating typhoon to have hit the country, and prior and subsequent typhoons, also took their toll on agriculture output.

There are studies that show that rice yield could decline by as much as 5-7 percent for every 1degree increase in average daily temperature. In the Department of Agriculture's "Midterm Assessment of the Food Staples Sufficiency Program, 2011-2013," it wrote that in 1991-2007, 69percent of production losses in Philippine rice production are attributed to flash floods and typhoons, 19percent to drought, 4.5percent to pests and diseases and 7percent to other causes. For corn, the corresponding losses are 46percent for flash floods and typhoons, 52percent from drought, about 2percent from pests and diseases and less than one percent from other causes. (DA, 30 October 2015, p. 58)

Likewise, the rise in ocean temperature lead to coral bleaching, which affects fish supply and shoreline protection.

Fiscal Space vs Institution's Absorptive Capacity

Government spending, coupled with renewed confidence in the economy by investors, actually played a key role in the significant, albeit non-inclusive growth that the economy achieved under the Aquino Administration. Yet, after getting over the governance learning curve and putting in place mechanisms to ensure transparency in the delivery of public goods

and services, government found itself awash with unspent money. Towards the middle of 2015, some P300 billion of programmed spending for that year remained unspent.

Government quickly put together a package called Accelerated and Sustainable Anti-Poverty Program (ASAPP) targeting ten priority provinces with the highest magnitudes of poverty to somehow utilize the unspent funds. It would focus on secondary growth areas, where hubs-and-spokes cities and municipalities are hoped to be interlinked with targeted government support alongside private, LGU, and grassroots commitments. “Salubungan” which literally means an intersection; the coming together of different stakeholders’ interests, was how it was aptly termed but perhaps the program was conceptualized too late. On second thought, even if it were introduced earlier, absorptive capacities of institutions – government agencies, local governments and grassroots organizations really do have to be beefed up. No less than Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Secretary Florencio Abad lamented that, in the first place, underspending was mainly due to poor planning by the agencies. (Human Development and Poverty Reduction Cabinet Cluster, 2015)

What’s in store?

Towards the end of the Aquino Administration, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) touched base with our people and did a survey of our hopes and aspirations. After asking ten thousand respondents on what kind of life they wish to have, four out of five responded that they just want a simple, comfortable life. Dubbed as “Ambisyon 2040”, NEDA tried to capture and articulate an ordinary Filipino’s hopes, and thus “(I)n 2040, we will all enjoy a stable and comfortable lifestyle, secure in the knowledge that we have enough for our daily needs and unexpected expenses, that we can plan and prepare for our own and our children’s future. Our family lives together in a place of our own, yet we have the freedom to go where we desire, protected and enabled by a clean, efficient and fair government.” (Esguerra, 2016)

NEDA adds that “with the right policies, improvements in productivity and efficiency we can triple our per capita income to about \$11,000 in 25 years, allowing majority of our people to enjoy nearly high-income country standards of living.”

This means that, barring any changes in our Constitution that might alter our form of government and the term-limits of elective positions, the current and the next two administrations will have to design economic planning towards that. By then, it will actually be ten years beyond 2030.

Some caveat though on the \$11,000 per capita income goal. Green economy advocates suggest a per capita income cap of just \$9,000 as beyond that actually raises our carbon footprint.

New administration, new economic policies

It may be too soon to actually say whether or not the Duterte Administration will put in place a set of economic policies that will eventually transform our economy into something that will generate sustainable, full and decent employment. But if it is any indication, President Duterte’s ten-point economic agenda is fundamentally the same economic framework as its predecessor’s, except that it will seriously push for a change in the Constitution to allow full foreign ownership in businesses engaged in economic activities currently reserved for Filipinos. The ten points include increasing competitiveness, accelerating infrastructure spending with public-private sector partnerships on the side, promoting rural enterprises, investing in health

and education, putting in place a progressive tax policy, providing social protection including the continuation of the conditional cash transfer, and strengthening the implementation of the reproductive health law.

The push for rural development through enterprises, value chain development and tourism in the countryside bears watching as it can equalize the unequal regional developments.

Yet, this early, there are some policy inconsistencies -- what with their pronouncement of having a progressive tax policy while at the same time their economic technocrats are already mouthing an increase in the more regressive Value-Added Tax (VAT) rate from 12percent to 15percent.

ASEAN integration and other global integration moves

The goal of an ASEAN Regional Economy by 2015 is really yet to be achieved. It has four pillars but as of 2011, the scorecard on the first pillar, which aims to put in place a “single market and production base” – free flow of investment, capital and skilled labor – is at 66 percent. Of the 273 liberalization measures, 114 are fully implemented, some 59 are not yet fully implemented. (AER-IP, 2016)

President Duterte said that he will respect all international laws, and all commitments and treaties made by the government. But as it is, and if liberalization under ASEAN is to proceed, the same set of agriculture commodities claimed to be in danger when we entered WTO in 2004 – rice, sugar, and corn – are still facing the same vulnerability as before.

The US under Obama is gung-ho in pushing for a similar opening up of markets among countries through what they call Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA). Some of Aquino's economic advisers are in favor of it.

Moving nearer Goal 8

It is to the credit of the Aquino Administration that confidence of investors was restored with some of the governance reforms it undertook. What is missing in the whole “Daang or the “Straight Path” mantra though is the answer to the question “*Where does this road lead to?*”. Equally important is the answer to the question, “*How do we get there?*”

Sadly, the kind of policies that were put in place clears the road of obstructions (open budget, the General Appropriations Act as the release document, serious implementation of the Procurement Law) but the road signages remain nebulous.

Our economic managers have to make that great leap towards not just putting in place an environment for investors to freely come in where they want to but to boldly adopt and implement an ***industrial policy***. It should clearly spell out what industries need to be strategically developed so that industries become pivots for higher agricultural productivity, greater value-adding activities, product innovation and absorption of the rural workforce in the manufacturing sector.

Freeing markets will not transform an economy that is controlled by old and new elites into something that will allow inclusive growth. Government must complete the asset reform program that will complement the trade and fiscal policy as guided by a clear industrialization plan. Simply put, government must not just clear the traffic. It must direct it.

This should be complemented by the “hubs and spokes” and participatory budgeting and governance principles so that development is not just centred in traditional growth areas but is spread in other regions.

Easier said than done....yes. For all of these entail institutions strong enough to resist regulatory capture: a highly professionalized bureaucracy, significant numbers of nationalist and creative entrepreneurs, dynamic local executives and a vibrant people's movement.

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Social Enterprise as Game Changer in a Corporate-led Economy

By Marie Lisa Dacanay*

The Philippine development paradox of high poverty and inequality despite economic growth is a difficult starting point for the country to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Only a fundamental shift in the way we conceive of economic development and the pursuit of innovative, game changing strategies will get us there.

It is not enough to promote corporate social responsibility towards making our corporate-led market economy work better. We need to conceive of a plural economy (Laville, 2010) where social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders or SEPPS (Dacanay, 2012) are key players in building ethical markets and a strong social economy.

Ethical markets result from a process of internalizing social and environmental costs and benefits in the valuation of goods and services as they are produced, traded and consumed in the marketplace. A strong social economy means that the principles of reciprocity and redistribution, rather than purely market principles, are governing the development and growth of social enterprises as sustainable and innovative mechanisms for enabling the poor to become stakeholders in economic development.

A pathway towards building ethical markets and a strong social economy is social entrepreneurship. This means creating innovative, multi-stakeholder platforms that would nurture a vibrant sector of SEPPS to create decent jobs and livelihoods, practice sustainable consumption and production, achieve zero poverty and hunger, address inequality and empower women.

What are Social Enterprises with the Poor as Primary Stakeholders?

Social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders or SEPPS are responses to the systemic and widespread poverty, inequality and the continuing failure of state and market institutions to serve the needs of the poor in developing countries such as the Philippines. A Philippine SEPPS Study conducted by the author crafted this definition:

“SEPPS are social mission-driven wealth creating organizations that have at least a double bottom line (social and financial), explicitly have as principal objective poverty reduction or improving the quality of life of specific segments of the poor, and have a distributive enterprise philosophy”. (Dacanay, “Enhancing Social Entrepreneurship” p. 51)

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Being social mission driven, SEPPS engage the poor not only as workers, clients, suppliers or nominal owners of these enterprises. More importantly, SEPPS engage the poor as partners in social enterprise and value chain management; as full-fledged owners and decision makers in social enterprise governance; and as change agents for themselves and their community, sector or society as a whole.

Just like business or private enterprises, and unlike the traditional non-profit organizations that are dependent on grants or public subsidies - or wealth created somewhere else - SEPPS are engaged in the production and sale of goods and services. However, unlike business or private enterprises that principally produce and sell goods and services to create profit for shareholders, SEPPS create surplus or profit to pursue their social mission in a sustainable way. Their financial bottom line plays a supportive role to their social bottom line.

The distributive enterprise philosophy of SEPPS is in contrast to the accumulative philosophy of private enterprises. While private enterprises create and accumulate wealth for the owners of capital, SEPPS create social and economic value that primarily accrue to the poor as primary stakeholders. Unlike in a business or private enterprise where payments or wages made to the poor are considered as financial costs to be minimized, these are considered as social benefits for primary stakeholders that need to be optimized. SEPPS build the assets and capability of the poor to move them out of poverty as productive citizens in ethical markets and the social economy.

The Poor and Major Segments of SEPPS in the Philippines

Based on another study by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA, 2015) the most significant segments of the poor served by SEPPS are the enterprising poor, farmers, agricultural workers, indigenous people, poor in urban communities, persons with disability, unemployed and underemployed, and the women cutting across these segments. A big number of the poor outreach of SEPPS are marginalized or socially and economically challenged women.

The nature of impacts on the poor by the SEPPS surveyed include:

- increased, diversified, and sustainable sources of income
- increased capacity to cover basic household needs and improved quality of life
- improved access to social and community services
- movement out of poverty
- improved participation, position, and empowerment of the poor
- improved status and empowerment of women in the community
- increased capacity for self-governance and to contribute to community development
- increased level of community development and prosperity

There is as yet no comprehensive profile of social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders in the Philippines. A rapid appraisal in 2007, which was further refined by the ISEA SEPPS Study, estimated the number of SEPPS at around 15,500. (ISEA, 2015, p. 19)

There are five (5) significant segments of SEPPS that have been identified by the ISEA SEPPS Study. These segments, as shown below, may be differentiated in terms of nature and form of organization, initiators and main services provided to the poor.

- ***Cooperatives of the poor and serving the poor, or social cooperatives (social coops).***
Out of the 23,672 cooperatives registered in the country's Cooperative Development Authority in 2013, the ISEA SEPPS Study estimated that over 11,000 were SEPPS. These are cooperatives of the poor and serving the poor. They have an estimated membership

of around 4.56 million. The poor include farmers, agrarian reform beneficiaries, fishers, vendors, entrepreneurial poor, persons with disability and women of these sectors. An example of a social coop is the Omaganhan Farmers Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperative in Leyte.

- ***Social mission-driven microfinance institutions (SMD-MFIs).*** Among the providers of financial or microfinance services to the poor, the ISEA SEPPS Study estimated that about 2.5. million poor are reached by 2,000 MFIs that may be considered SEPPS or SMD-MFIs. Many of these are non- government development organizations that went into microfinance services including savings, credit, and micro-insurance. Many SMD-MFIs have diversified their services to include various forms of social protection, education and training, business development, and value chain development. An example of a social mission-driven microfinance institution that has evolved into a multi-organizational group of social enterprises with these multiple services is the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD-MRI).
- ***Fair Trade Organizations (FTOs).*** FTOs provide marginalized producers access to markets using globally recognized fair trade principles. They enable marginalized or small producers by establishing strategic partnerships with them as supplier communities, providing fair prices for their produce, pre-financing for production, training, and capacity building. Fair trade organizations affiliated with the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) practice a comprehensive WFTO Standard and Guarantee System based on 10 fair trade principles. In 2012, there were 32 fair trade organizations in the directory of the Philippine Fair Trade Forum. Examples of fair trade organizations are Alter Trade Foundation, Inc., which has demonstrated a model for moving agrarian reform beneficiaries out of poverty; and Bote Central. Inc., which enables coffee-producing communities to process their coffee beans and to retail coffee .
- ***Trading development organizations (TRADOs).*** TRADOs are non-government development organizations (NGDOs) engaged in the production and/or trading/marketing of goods and/or provision of economic services (i.e. financial services, enterprise development services). They engage in these economic activities to help sustain the NGDO operations and to serve specific sectors of the poor. A subset of this group are the NGDO-owned/initiated social enterprises: these were set up or initiated as commercial or trading arms of their parent NGDOs that usually take the form of stock-for-profit corporations. The number of TRADOs is difficult to ascertain but the ISEA SEPPS Study made an informed estimate of 2,500. Examples of trading development organizations are Tahanang Walang Hagdanan, which provides employment to persons with disability; and Pilipinas Ecofiber Corporation, a subsidiary of the Foundation for a Sustainable Society, Inc., which works to diversify and improve the incomes of coconut farmers.
- ***New-generation social enterprises (New-Gen SEs).*** New-Gen SEs is a rising segment of social enterprises established by young professionals or entrepreneurs with a social mission to help the poor. This is in contrast to the older generation of trading development organizations that are NGDO-initiated. There is not much literature yet on these SEs but among the more prominent ones are Gandang Kalikasan/Human Nature, Rags2Riches and Hapinoy. It is difficult to ascertain how many new-gen SEs exist but this is definitely a growing segment.

As can be noted from these segments, many SEPPS take the form of non-stock corporations, foundations, cooperatives, and associations where the distributive philosophy can be operationalized without much difficulty. While currently a minority, a growing number of

SEPPS have taken the form of stock corporations, and in the process have had to introduce innovations to practice a distributive philosophy. *Gandang Kalikasan/Human Nature* exemplifies some innovations in this regard. While the minimum wage required by law is about PHP480/day, the lowest paid worker in Gandang Kalikasan is receiving a living wage of PHP750/day. Gandang Kalikasan also plows back up to 100% of the profits from its best-selling product to partner supplier communities (ISEA, 2015, p. 81). The latter practice of plowing back profits to partner-producer organizations is also a longstanding practice of fair trade organizations. The use of these fair trade premiums is decided by the organizations of producers themselves.

SEPPS as Hybrid Agents of Change in Markets and the Economy

The findings of both the Philippine and ISEA SEPPS Studies clearly showed the nature of SEPPS as hybrid organizations straddling the for-profit and non-profit as well as the market and social spheres of the economy. As hybrid organizations, they provide a combination of market and non-market services to the poor that they serve, making them distinct from ordinary businesses. These may be classified into transactional, transformational and social inclusion services (Dacanay, 2012, 304 and 321; ISEA, 2015, p. 3).

- Transactional services pertain to enterprise or market-driven activities, such as providing loans, demonstrating new technologies or conducting trainings that are necessary for the poor in the social enterprise system to effectively and efficiently perform their roles as workers, suppliers, clients and nominal owners.
- Transformational services pertain to activities that empower the poor, such as leadership formation and organizational development, asset build-up, and provision of education and experiential learning opportunities, towards becoming full-fledged owners and conscious decision makers of SEPPS, towards taking over new roles or functions in value chains where they are situated, and towards becoming change agents for themselves, their communities, sectors and society as a whole.
- Social inclusion services are non-fee-based social welfare services, such as the development of community-based systems for health, water and sanitation, that directly assist the poor and their families to have immediate access to basic needs or to immediately improve their quality of life.

Potential for the Development and Growth of SEPPS

The data generated by the ISEA SEPPS Study provides an indication of the significance of the current and potential outreach of SEPPS among the poor. The purposive sample of 32 SEPPS surveyed, representing developed SEPPS that have been in existence for an average of 14 years, have a combined outreach of approximately 2.5 million poor. Considering that the number of poor families in the Philippines in 2012 was 4.2 million, the combined outreach of these SEPPS alone may already be considered significant.

The ISEA SEPPS Study also indicated a big potential for SEPPS to scale up their operations. When they were set up, the median size in terms of assets of the SEPPS surveyed was micro (USD70,000 or less). As of 2012, the median size of their asset base had already reached medium scale (above USD350 thousand to USD2.4 million).

The Philippine and ISEA SEPPS Studies suggest that SEPPS have the potential to evolve from an initial stage of economic organization, characterized by low internal organization, weak governance and inefficient management with great dependence on external support, to

a mature stage, where they can become financially autonomous socio-economic enterprises with a highly complex internal functioning and ability to serve the poor and their communities at large through innovation and collective learning.

Indeed, if one would just imagine a scenario where the 15,000 SEPPS in the Philippines, that are now mostly micro in size, could be assisted to become similar to the 32 developed SEPPS that were surveyed, their potential outreach and qualitative impact on the poor would really be quite significant.

In a context where conventional programs for reducing poverty have shown a lack of effectiveness, the Philippine and ISEA SEPPS Studies provide insights on conditions that can make social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders active vehicles for poverty eradication.

Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Bill and Coalition (Dacanay, "Transforming Wealth" PRESENT Coalition, 2015)

On February 16, 2012, social entrepreneurs and leaders of major national networks and resource institutions of social enterprises established the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Coalition. The Coalition is co-convened by the Ateneo de Manila University School of Government and the Foundation for a Sustainable Society, Inc., with the Philippine Social Enterprise Network as Secretariat. The PRESENT Coalition was formed during the National Stakeholders' Consultation on February 15-16, 2012, at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City. The Consultation was the culmination of an action research undertaken by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) to explore the features of a policy environment conducive to the development and growth of SEPPS.

The main output of the ISEA action research was a proposed legislative measure called the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship Bill. The proposed bill was discussed and enhanced by the participants of the national stakeholders' consultation. Box 1 discusses the main features of the bill resulting from the consultation process.

The stakeholders' version of the PRESENT Bill may be seen as a codification of an agenda for policy reform to recognize and support social enterprises as key players in poverty reduction. Since 2012, lobby efforts by the PRESENT Coalition in both houses of Congress and advocacy to have the bill considered a priority by the Office of the President have not borne fruit. It is hoped that the PRESENT Bill will get more support and would be prioritized by the incoming Duterte administration.

Developing Platforms for Cooperation

In response to Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest typhoons that hit the Philippines in 2013, members of the PRESENT Coalition and other stakeholders of the social enterprise sector came together to set up a platform called Reconstruction Initiative through Social Enterprise (RISE) in March 2014 (ISEA, 2014). RISE was envisioned as a multi-stakeholder effort to build back better local economies through social enterprise development.

One of the main strategies to be pursued was social entrepreneurship-oriented subsector development, similar to what has been envisioned in the PRESENT Bill. With the support of Oxfam, ISEA undertook another action research process that resulted to 5-Year Strategic Development and Investment Plans for three (3) strategic subsectors in Eastern Samar, one of the poorest of the Haiyan-devastated provinces. These three economic subsectors were

Box 1: The PRESENT Bill as Proposed by the PRESENT Coalition

The proposed legislative measure mandates the planning and implementation of a National Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Program.

The PRESENT Program is focused on the development of strategic economic subsectors with potentials for growth and where poverty groups are concentrated. The poor are expected to benefit the most from subsector development and growth through their effective participation as workers, suppliers, clients and/or owners of social enterprises and as partners in economic and social development. Substantive poverty reduction is envisioned as outcome.

The proposed law seeks to provide priority support and incentives to social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders in these strategic economic subsectors. Cognizant of the various legal forms that these organizations have taken – from cooperatives to non-stock, nonprofit corporations, to stock for-profit corporations, or a combination of these forms – the proposed Act provides for the qualification of these organizations as social enterprises to avail of support services and incentives from the state.

Support programs include:

- Provision of accessible non-collateralized loans to these social enterprises guaranteed by a pool of funds set up for such purpose;
- Setting up of a comprehensive insurance system to reduce the vulnerability of these social enterprises to climate change and natural calamities;
- Provision of resources for comprehensive capacity development for these social enterprises, enablers of social enterprises, and their partners among the poor;
- A proactive social enterprise market development program promoting the principles of fair trade;
- A research and development program involving strategic economic subsectors, appropriate social enterprise technologies, and innovations in democratizing access to quality basic social services.
- Mainstreaming of social entrepreneurship in the educational system at all levels to ensure strategic human resource development.

Incentives for social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders shall include:

- Preferential treatment in government procurement including coverage of their performance bonds;
- Tax exemptions and tax breaks; and
- Cash incentives equivalent to at least 25% of the minimum wage for social enterprises employing persons with disability.

Source: Dacanay, MLM. (2013). Social Enterprises and the Poor: Transforming Wealth, p.273

the seaweed, the native chicken, and the naturally grown rice subsectors, where a significant number of poor farmer and fisher households are situated. Five-Year Strategic Development and Investment Plans were crafted based on the action research results of teams deployed by ISEA in partnership with two of its Philippine members, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and the Philippine Network for Rural Development and Democratization (PhilNet-RDD).

To illustrate, the 5-Year Development and Investment Plan for the Seaweed Subsector (ISEA, 2015a, p. 2) envisions increasing the number of seaweed producers from 837 to 2,037, and to increase the productivity and annual incomes of these farmers to PhP110,000. This would represent a 60% increase in income from current levels and would push these households above what is officially considered the income poverty threshold. Based on the plan, the target outreach of 2,037 seaweed producer-households would entail an investment of PhP27,000 per

household over a 5-year period. Even as the estimated investment still needs to be refined, it is way below the 2013 government estimate of PhP220,000 needed to create one job in labor-intensive industries including agribusiness. What this indicates is the potential for the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship Program to bring about the reduction of income poverty among poor households in a more effective and efficient way.

Platforms for cooperation to demonstrate how the National PRESENT Program, as envisioned by the proposed law, could help support and scale up the impact of social enterprises as vehicles for poverty reduction, are important to pursue as a complementary process to creating an enabling policy and political environment for the growth and development of social enterprises.

SEPPS as Key Actors in Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

SEPPS are a significant model of social enterprise in response to poverty and inequality amidst economic growth in the Philippines. Through a combination of transformational, transactional and social inclusion services, SEPPS provide access to social and economic services as well as decent jobs and livelihoods to the poor. At their best, SEPPS enable the poor to move out of income poverty and capability deprivation, and to become key actors in the economy. This nature of SEPPS puts them in a good position to become major partners of government, corporations, civil society, and social movements to achieve the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this context, it is proposed that social entrepreneurship be a major platform for innovation and multi-stakeholder collaboration to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this way, social entrepreneurship could serve as a framework for innovative public-private partnerships that are anchored on scaling up the outreach and impact of social enterprises, as well as replicating successful models that have effectively provided sustainable livelihoods and quality social services, and transformed the lives of the poor and marginalized in the country.

To aid the process of building these social entrepreneurship platforms, it is proposed that the Philippine government puts in place dedicated policies and programs to support social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders. The stakeholders' version of the PRESENT Bill is an important legislative proposal that needs to be given priority. At the same time, it is proposed that a substantive part of Official Development Assistance supports a National Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship Program that would mainstream the subsector approach envisioned in the PRESENT Bill. Such a program, focused on providing sustainable livelihoods to the poor, could very well be the post-Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) initiative under the new administration. And, if given as much resources as the CCT, it certainly could be a game changer in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

End Note

¹ Value chains are vertical networks of economic actors that buy and sell from each other as they perform various functions to produce or provide and deliver products or services to end markets. In agricultural value chains, social enterprises enable small producers such as farmers to increase their productivity and incomes, to take over functions and to enhance their position in these value chains. In the process, farmers are organized and enabled to negotiate as well as participate in managing the changing requirements of markets.

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Sustaining life on land and below water

*By Isagani R. Serrano**

Nearly 102 million now inhabit the Philippines, a fragile archipelagic system which may now have a carrying capacity for only much less.

The Philippines is half urban, half rural. The urban population was at 48.9 % in 2010 and for some reason seemed to have remained at that level.

Some 20 million people live in slums (BBC) or slum-like conditions in both cities and countryside. The primate metropolitan Manila account for about 37% or over 4.0 million of the slum population in 2010, growing at 8% annually. (PIDS “Linking Poverty and Environment”) Everyday these slum dwellers and informal settlers suffer different forms of poverty amid deterioration of their urban environment.

The urban population lives mostly in 12 metropolitan centers of Manila, Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Angeles, Iloilo, Bacolod, Naga, Baguio, Batangas, Dagupan and Olongapo. These leading industrial, financial, commercial, and technological centers are icons of prosperity that continue to attract migration from rural areas.

The National Capital Region (NCR) has almost 13 million inhabitants. Central Luzon has 11 million and Calabarzon, the most populous, has 14 million. These three adjacent, highly urbanized, Manila Bay - oriented regions account for nearly two-fifths of the total population and share about three-fifths of the nation’s wealth and income.

At the end of the MDG era, more than 26 million Filipinos are still being left behind. Almost half of them, or a little more than 12 million, live in extreme poverty and lack the means to live in dignity. These excluded millions occupy the base of a social pyramid, at the tip of which, are the less than one percent who control the wealth of the nation.

The challenge before us is how to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities. How do we secure the food, homes, jobs, education, health, rights and freedoms, the well-being and happiness of so many, with an economy that continues to reproduce poverty and inequality and degrade our environment?

The country is deemed most at risk to disasters on account of climate change and weather extremes. About 60 percent of the population live in 832 municipalities located along the country’s 36,236-kilometer-long coastline. These communities are highly vulnerable to storm surges and slow-onset events like sea level rise.

Between our archipelago’s ridge and reef we find our upland, lowland and coastal ecosystems at varying levels of degradation. The causes are many, the effects far-reaching and enduring, affecting the livability of our towns and cities.

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The country still enjoys natural abundance. It is a wet country where you can grow almost anything, literally. In contrast to resource-poor countries, Korea for example, the Philippines is a paradise of biodiversity harboring more diversity of life than any other country in the world on a per hectare basis. It belongs to the 17 mega-diverse countries which host 70-80 percent of the world's biodiversity. But the Philippines is also a biodiversity hotspot as a consequence of human activities that degrade terrestrial and marine ecosystems at increasingly alarming levels.

Deforestation and mining operations, unsustainable agricultural and farming practices, destructive fishing, poor waste management, unbridled urban sprawl, and poorly designed human settlements all contribute to land and water degradation and to air pollution.

State of land and water degradation

Even without a new national policy on land use, nearly all of 30 million hectares of the Philippines' land area had already been classified and assessed in the Land Degradation in the Philippines 2013. This assessment was done in 2011-2013 through an inter-agency effort led by the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Soil and Water Management (DA-BSWM). Assessment of the extent and gravity of land degradation is a first step for any meaningful development of the National Action Program (NAP), the main instrument for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The UNCCD is one of the conventions, together with the conventions on biodiversity and climate change, that came out of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. After joint ratification by the Senate and House in 2000, the Philippines became a party to the Convention.

Though a humid country and originally outside the geographic focus of the UNCCD, the country currently experiences seasonal aridity and other forms of land degradation. This gets worse during El Niño, as in the 1997-1998 and 2015-2016 episodes. Soil erosion brought about by heavy rains during the monsoon season remains the major cause of land degradation. The impact is especially harsh in areas covered by logging and mining operations.

Despite wide variations in estimates and in the major indicator parameters for the assessment, the net productivity of the primary industries—forestry, agriculture, and fisheries—remain the most heavily affected. And the impacts of land degradation in these sectors have serious implications on the whole economy, with the rural economy and rural poor suffering the most.

The BSWM-led assessment was done under the aegis of the “National Capability Building for Philippine Land Degradation Assessment and Climate Change Adaptation”. It used the World Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and the Land Degradation Assessment (LADA) developed by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) specifically for drylands. The approach is holistic and participatory, involving various stakeholders in generating data relevant to prevention and mitigation of land degradation covering soil, water, vegetation and biodiversity, climate, and socio-economic driving forces.

The Philippine LADA Project tested the global drylands land degradation assessment method in a humid country and delineated the so-called ‘hot spots’ and ‘bright spots’ as input to the review of the National Action Program. The assessment has evolved from being purely soil- focused into one more holistic ecosystem-focused, and from having a narrow focus on

production to the more encompassing ecosystem services, such as provisioning of food, fiber, medicine and other goods; regulating water systems; soil nutrient recycling and priceless cultural satisfaction and happiness for humans.

The Land Use System (LUS) Map is the basic unit for the evaluation of land degradation since land use is considered the single most important driver of land degradation. The LUS Maps of 2003 and 2010, based on the land cover maps issued by the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), were used to track where land degradation was happening and why, and what forms of land conservation practices were being observed.

The typology includes 13 categories of land use, indicating intensity of human activity:

1. Rice, irrigated. This covers 1,272,283.18 hectares of irrigated agricultural lands, mostly small farms or field units of less than 10 hectares, close to rural population centers and under intensive cultivation. These areas total about 1.5 million hectares. At the moment, about 1.2 million hectares are in map form. The remaining 0.3 million hectares represent an aggregation of small fields not captured in the current map scale. This LUS also includes 8,844.79 hectares of protected areas under the jurisdiction of the Protected Areas and Wildlife or PAWB, now known as Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB).

2. Rainfed agricultural lands. This covers 10,006,545.25 hectares of non-irrigated and rainfed agricultural lands, mostly small farms or field units of less than 10 hectares close to rural population centers. Field units can either be grouped as 'intensive' or as 'widely spaced', depending on the extent of the area under cultivation and the proximity to rural dwellings and grazing areas and livestock raising. Field units are rainfed, multi-cropping of annuals, for either individual or village markets and may include fallow and 'old fields', and some inter-field grazing areas. The rainfed, agricultural lands category is further subdivided into four sub-land use systems:

- **Rice and corn lands.** Lowland and upland areas under rainfed/upland rice and corn-based cropping systems cover 6,044,257.57 hectares or 60.40 percent of the total rainfed agricultural areas.
- **Sugarcane lands.** Lowland and upland areas under sugarcane-based cropping system cover 374,996.77 hectares or 3.48 percent of the total rainfed agricultural areas.
- **Coconut lands.** Lowland and upland areas under coconut-based cropping system cover 3,562,485.22 hectares or 3.6 percent of the total rainfed agricultural areas.
- **Diversified upland crops and fruit orchards.** Lowland and upland areas under a mix cropping systems, both perennials and annuals, cover 24,805.69 hectares or 35.6 percent of the total rainfed agricultural areas.

3. Forest, protected. This covers 6,286,312.17 hectares of national parks, provincial nature reserves, bird sanctuaries, botanical gardens, conservation areas, and national heritage sites, but excludes private game farms, private nature reserves and state land included in the related natural vegetation biomes. It also includes all forestlands under National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and the expanded NIPAS covering 1,490,693.87 hectares under PAWB jurisdiction.

4. Forest, plantations. This covers 1,045,681.18 hectares of forest stands established by planting and/or seeding in the process of afforestation or reforestation. These plantations use introduced species (all planted stands), or intensively managed stands of indigenous species, which meet all of the following criteria: one or two species at plantation, even age class, regular spacing. They include "Agroforestry" or areas of the Philippines classified as forest lands that are under some forms of Community-Based Forest Management Program. Also included are 5,164.49 hectares of protected forest plantations under PAWB jurisdiction.

5. Grasslands, unmanaged. Covering 3,164,905.32 hectares, this comprise our natural grasslands with no significant sign of human activity. It includes 171,120.65 of protected grasslands under PAWB jurisdiction.

6. Grasslands with very low to low livestock density. This covers 1,526,856.43 hectares. Grasslands are defined as those areas where grasses dominate the vegetation, woody plants are absent or rare, and livestock density is low. This includes 115,289.76 hectares of protected grasslands with very low to low livestock density under PAWB jurisdiction.

7. Grasslands with medium to high livestock density. This type of grasslands covers 144,267.83 hectares, including 5,320.47 hectares of protected grasslands with high livestock density under PAWB jurisdiction.

8. Shrubs, unmanaged. Covering 5,009,810.86 hectares, this refers to vegetation types where the dominant woody elements are shrubs, i.e. woody perennial plants, generally of more than 0.5 m and less than 5 m in height on maturity and without a definite crown. The height limits for trees and shrubs should be interpreted with flexibility, particularly the minimum tree and maximum shrub height, which may vary between 5 and 7 meters approximately. It includes 370,033.28 hectares of protected, unmanaged shrubs under PAWB jurisdiction.

9. Forest, mangrove. Covering 212,256.80 hectares (different sources give different estimates which vary widely from the original 1918 baseline of 500,000 hectares), this is the type of forest occurring on tidal flats along the sea coast extending along the streams where the water is brackish and composed mainly of different mangrove and nipa species. It includes 22,804.32 hectares of protected forest-mangroves under PAWB jurisdiction.

10. Wetlands, unmanaged. Covering 154,405.32 hectares, this refers to inland and coastal habitats linked by rivers and streams, sharing common and important functions in river catchments by providing regular water supply, filtering the water naturally, reducing the effects of floods and droughts, and providing a vital wildlife habitat and ecotourism opportunities. Most wetlands are characterized by a high water table, water-carrying soil and hydrophytes or water-loving plants. It includes 58,901.26 hectares of protected, unmanaged wetlands under PAWB jurisdiction.

11. Open water, inland fisheries, brackish water. This covers 189,596.81 hectares of generally permanent open water. It includes both natural and man-made waterbodies, which are either static or flowing, in brackish and salt-water conditions. Included are 3,443.54 hectares of protected open water/inland fisheries/brackish water under PAWB jurisdiction.

12. Bare areas, unmanaged. This covers 99,783.41 hectares of barren land without vegetation, including areas with less than 4% vegetative cover and no significant sign of human activity. This includes bare rock and sand dune areas as well as 1,997.82 hectares of protected, unmanaged bare areas under PAWB jurisdiction.

13. Urban Areas. This covers 222,584.27 hectares humans built up, spanning the residential, commercial, industrial, or institutional sector. It includes 6,233.12 hectares of urban green spaces or protected areas under PAWB jurisdiction.

In all, these land-use types total 29,596,493.35 hectares.

The DIPSIR framework used in the analysis of land degradation is complex enough as to allow categorical conclusions on the level of degradation of each of these land use types. Driving forces cover such macroeconomic factors as land use policies, population and development, population growth, climate change, disasters, etc. Pressures talks of demands from agriculture, urban development, etc that stress carrying capacity. State refers to land productivity decline, soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, etc. Impacts includes productivity decline, poverty and migration, habitat destruction, etc. Responses refers to macroeconomic policies and

instruments, international commitments, investments in land and water resources, early warning systems and monitoring, among others.

It is also not easy to draw straightforward connections to generally observed land degradation from the three samples used for ground truth validation, though these were chosen to represent the topographic variability and land use of the country and to reflect the typical challenges of both rural and urbanizing community. The three LADA pilot sites selected were San Jose Del Monte City in Bulacan for Luzon, Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental for Visayas, and Balingasag Municipality in Misamis Oriental for Mindanao.

In any case, general conclusions could be made on the level of land degradation from existing studies and data available from different agencies, from results of workshops conducted during the assessment period and from expert knowledge. Between 2003 and 2010, there has been significant degradation of land and water resources enough to warrant a wake-up call.

Running through the whole landscape are vital river systems connecting the mountains to the seas and the surrounding communities. These lifelines are invariably degraded, as shown in the comparative degradation summary of 19 priority rivers in eight regions. The assessment was based on average levels (mg/L) of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), comparing 2003 with 2010.

The Meycauayan, Marilao and Bocaue Rivers in Region III are very much below water quality standards but improving. The Imus and Ylang-ylang Rivers in Region IV-A are very much below water standards -- and worsening. The Mogpog and Calapan Rivers in Region IV-B are below water quality standards and likewise, worsening. The same is true with Balili River in the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR) and the Iloilo River in Region VI. The Amayan, Malaguit and Panique Rivers in Region V are within water quality standards, and so is the Cagayan De Oro River in Region X. The Luyang and Sapangdaku Rivers in Region VII are within water quality standards but worsening. The Marikina, San Juan, Paranaque and Pasig Rivers in the National Capital Region (NCR) are way below water standards and worsening. These river systems are being used as dumpsites and sewers.

Degradation of marine ecosystems

Faced with a huge population and shrinking farmlands, the country would have more scope from its territorial waters and the bounty of its marine ecosystem. But the country's marine ecosystem itself has long been under severe pressure from destructive human activities to the point where the rate of degradation may be overtaking conservation and resource regeneration efforts.

The continuing degradation of the mangrove ecosystem is alarming enough. Mangroves are a good source of food and medicine. They support fisheries production and aquaculture. They provide nursery grounds, shelter and food for fish and other sea creatures. They protect coastal communities from storm surges, waves, tides, and currents. They act as carbon sink by reducing organic pollution along shore areas. They serve as recreational grounds for communities and nature tourists. They stabilize the coastline by reducing erosion. The conversion of mangroves to other uses lead to loss of all these benefits.

Incidences of "fish kill" and "red tide" are on the rise. These are attributed to loss of significant functions of the remaining degraded mangroves aggravated by high chemical and fertilizer inputs from the neighboring agro-ecosystems, and sewage from residential neighborhoods and industrial estates.

As a consequence of mangrove destruction, seagrass and coral reef ecosystems have also deteriorated, destroying as much as 70% of the coral cover with about 25% in good condition and 5% in excellent condition, according to some studies. It has been estimated that there is a reduction of as much as 670 kilograms in fish catch for every hectare of mangrove forest that is clear cut. About 50-75% of the world's commercial species are dependent on mangrove swamps, marshes, seagrass meadows, mudflats, and coral reefs for habitat. Fish biomass in mangrove swamps is estimated to be much higher than in adjacent open waters.

Shoreline erosion especially in most typhoon-prone areas and decline in forest structure of plant species in most of the remaining mangrove stand are contributory factors. Waste dumping in open waters, oil spills, poaching by foreign fishers, overfishing and destructive fishing technologies, among others, all combine to create a spiral marine ecosystem degradation.

There is no shortage of laws and policies to protect the remaining mangrove areas in the Philippines. Sustainable conservation and management relies on strict implementation. Zoning has also been recommended for the remaining mangrove forests. A buffer zone of 20 to 50 meters along riverbanks and 50 to 100 meters facing open seas is advocated. Mangrove-friendly aquaculture technologies are being promoted. The National Wetland Action Plan for the Philippines has specific set of activities to address the rehabilitation and conservation of mangrove areas.

Organized fishing communities are in the forefront of marine conservation efforts in coastal and open waters. They lead in the implementation of Community-Based Coastal Resources Management (CB-CRM). Through co-management arrangements, they work closely with local governments and other agencies to arrest further depletion and pollution of marine resources and promote sustainable fisheries.

The carbon footprint of Filipinos

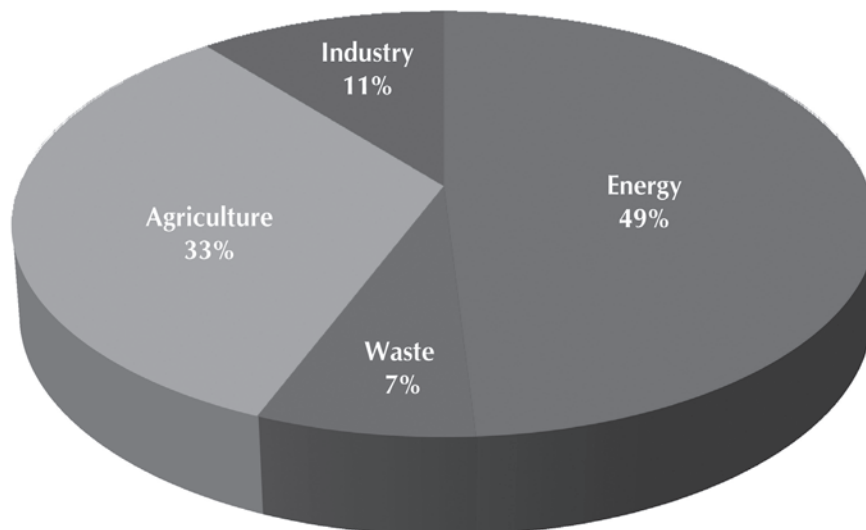
The 1994 Philippines' Initial National Communication (INC) recorded the country's baseline (Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory at 100.7 MtCO₂eq. The INC conservatively projected this to increase to 195.091 MtCO₂eq in 2008, an annual growth rate of 4.8% over 14 years. Counter-intuitively, the Second National Communication (SNC) of 2009 reported a big drop in our emissions, apparently on account of the removal and sink effect of land use change and forestry (LUCF), offsetting combined increases in energy, industry, agriculture and waste sectors.

On the other hand, according to the Philippine Senate Planning Office (SEPO using data from the European Commission, the Philippines' emission grew from its 1990 levels to almost 200 MtCO₂ in 2010 at an average rate of 3.25 %. The country ranks 6th in Southeast Asia with 0.31% share of the global GHG emissions, and remains a net carbon sink.

Burning of fossil fuels in 1994 accounted for about 50 MtCO₂, nearly half of the national total of GHG emissions. According to the UNFCCC Brief 2014, the Philippines CO₂ emission from fuel combustion alone is 79.5 MtCO₂eq, or a per capita of 0.82 tCO₂ in 2012. Philippine population stood at 98.39 million Filipinos in 2012 and 68.05 million in 1994. On 1 October, 2015, prior to the Paris COP 21, the Philippines submitted as its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) a conditional greenhouse gas reduction target of 70% below business-as-usual (BAU) levels by 2030.

The target, covering all emissions from all sectors, including land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), is conditional on "the extent of financial resources, including technology development and transfer, and capacity building, that will be made available to the Philippines." (Climate Action Tracker) This would imply a full implementation of the planned 'National

Figure 1. 1994 GHG emissions from non-LUCF sectors of energy, agriculture, industry and waste.



Renewable Energy Program and The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Roadmap' would bring emissions halfway towards meeting the INDC target.

However, the INDC target is unlikely to be met if government were to build all of the announced coal-fired power plants with a total capacity of more than 10 GW. (Climate Action Tracker

Policy responses through the years

Measures undertaken by government and citizens to reverse environmental degradation are laudable but seem inadequate. Table 1 tells us that our country has more than enough of policies and legislation to address land and water degradation and as well as air pollution, despite the failure of Congress to legislate a comprehensive land use policy.

Table 1. Key Policies, Legislations and Programs

Marcos Era

- **(1969) Republic Act 4850 - Creation of the Laguna Lake Development Authority**
- (1973) Presidential Decree 198 - National Policy on local water systems and national administration to facilitate improvement of local water utilities
- (1975) Presidential Decree 705 - Forestry Code
- (1975) Presidential Decree 704 - Fisheries Code
Revised and consolidated all laws and decrees affecting fishing and fisheries in the country
- (1976) Presidential Decree 1067 - Water Code
- (1976) Presidential Decree 984 - Pollution Control Law – Provides guidelines for the prevention, abatement and control of pollution of water, air and land
- (1977) Presidential Decree 1219 - Coral Reefs Conservation
- (1977) Presidential Decree 1181 - Vehicular Emissions Control Law – Prevention, control and abatement of air pollution from motor vehicles
- (1977) Presidential Decree 1151 - Philippine Environmental Policy – First mention of concept of environmental impact system
- (1977) Presidential Decree 1151 - Philippine Environmental Code - Provides guidelines on land use, air quality, water quality, waste management, and natural resources management
- (1977) Presidential Decree 856 - Sanitation Code
- (1978) Presidential Decree 1586 - Philippine Environmental Impact Statement System – Mandates EIS for government and private sector projects affecting the quality of the environment
- (1979) Presidential Proclamation 2146 - Environmentally critical projects and environmentally critical areas
- (1980) Presidential Decree 600 - Marine Pollution (1976, as amended by PD 1698)

Post-Marcos Era

- (1986) Philippine Constitution – This contains the State’s obligation to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology. (Article 2, section 15 and 16)
- (1987) Executive Order 192 – Creation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- (1987) Republic Act 6657 – Comprehensive Agrarian Reform – Exempts lands devoted to reforestation, wildlife, etc. from land conversion
- (1991) Republic Act 7076 – People’s Small Scale Mining Program
- (1991) Republic Act 7160 – Local Government Code – Strengthens the role of LGUs in governance and development
- (1991) Ratification of the Montreal Protocol
- (1991) Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change
- (1992) Republic Act 7279 - Urban Development and Housing Act
- (1992) Executive Order 15 - Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)
- (1992) Republic Act 6969 - Toxic Substances, Hazardous and Nuclear Waste
- (1992) Republic Act 7586 – National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS)
- (1993) Philippine Population Management Program (PPMP)
- (1993) Power Crisis Act

- (1994) Ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- (1994) Philippine Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation
- (1995) Water Crisis Act
- (1995) Republic Act 7942 – Mineral Exploration, Development and Conservation
- (1995) Republic Act 8172 – Act for Salt Iodization Nationwide or ASIN
- (1995) Social Reform Agenda - translation of Copenhagen Social Summit commitments
- (1995) Gathering for Human and Ecological Security (GHES)
- (1995) Executive Order 247 – Bioprospecting
- (1995) Executive Order 263 – Community-Based Forestry Management Strategy
- (1995) Philippine Action Plan for HABITAT II
- (1996) Philippine Agenda 21—translation of the Earth Summit’s global Agenda 21
- (1996) Executive Order 291 – Improving the EIS System established in 1978
- (1997) Republic Act 8371 - Indigenous People’s Rights Act
- (1997) Republic Act 8435 – Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization
- (1998) Republic Act 8550 – Fisheries Code
- (1999) Republic Act 8749 – Comprehensive Air Pollution Control Policy (otherwise known as the Clean Air Act)
- (2001) Solid Waste Management Act
- (2008) Renewable Energy Act
- (2009) Climate Change Act
- (2010) National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act
- (2010) Organic Agriculture Act

These policies and legislations (Serrano “The Philippines Ten years after Rio; WB “Environment Monitor; PCSD “Agenda 21”) and the programs resulting from these mandates need only to be funded and implemented well.

Between now and 2030

The first order of the day for the new regime (2016-2022) of President Duterte is to set the roadmap for restoration of the health of the environment and on that basis the building of sustainable communities. It begins with implementing the good environmental laws.

The new regime must certify as urgent the land and water use bill that has been pending for so long. The National Forest Assessment of 2005 and the land degradation assessment (LADA) of 2013 could be the base reference.

President Duterte promises to leave no one behind. He must ensure that no Filipino family will be landless or homeless under his watch. His administration must identify the owner of every square meter of land in the country and start a new land and water reform that will consider the entire 30 million hectares and coastal areas of the country. There should be public disclosure of all landowners and their property covering both rural and urban areas. A new type of land reform is needed to ensure land rights and land justice for every Filipino.

This coming administration needs to increase public spending on public goods: on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), rural roads, drainage and flood control, etc., with a long view to transforming slums into sustainable communities.

Likewise, the incoming regime must review the country’s energy and infrastructure policies, ensuring that no home is without access to electricity, preferably generated from renewable sources.

President Duterte must heed the popular demand to review the Mining Act and other laws on extractives.

The implementation of the National Greening Program (NGP) must be reviewed. The review must take into account the assessments already done related to biodiversity programs in terrestrial and marine ecosystems, not to mention climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction programs, like the NCCAP, LCCAP, and DRRMPs.

The immediate task at hand for the new Duterte regime is to lay the grounds for the eventual realization of land degradation neutrality (LDN) through sustainable land management (SLM), integrated water resources management (IWRM), sustainable forest management (SFM), sustainable agriculture and fisheries and other conservation practices that span upland, lowland and coastal ecosystems, all in time for 2030.

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Children and the SDGs: Children as Key Indicators of Development



This Sectoral Report on Children highlights progress on the child-focused SDG goals, obstacles to achieving these goals as they relate to children, and recommendations to ensure that the goals enshrined in the SDGs are being delivered to children and that they are directly benefiting from these. The Report focuses on the following 7 SDGs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 16.

Ending Child Poverty (In Line with SDG 1)

Children are among the three poorest sectors with a poverty incidence rate of 36.5% in 2012, higher than the 19.7% national poverty incidence among families in the same year. (PSA, 2012) In 2009, 16% (around 5.9 million) of the child population lived in extreme poverty (food poverty), while 1 in 10 families with children lacked the minimum income needed to provide for their basic food. (Reyes *et al.*, p.15)

Children who are poor also suffer from multiple deprivation measured in terms of lack of access to water and sanitation, shelter, basic health and education services, information, and other basic public and social services. (Reyes *et al.*, 2014) Poverty exacts long-term impacts on children's well-being and compounds children's vulnerability, exposing them to even greater

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risks of abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence that result in further exclusion and discrimination.

Children are very much dependent on the support, care and protection of their parents and caregivers, and on the capacity of their families to provide for their basic needs. Because poor children's families themselves are vulnerable and marginalized, it is critical to increase the resilience



of parents and caregivers so that they become less susceptible to the negative impacts of disasters and are able to eschew coping mechanisms that can be harmful to children such as child labor and trafficking. In addressing child poverty, therefore, it would be important to build the capacities of parents and caregivers through alternative livelihoods, effective parenting and child rights education. The lack of investments in the sectors of agriculture and fisheries, where majority of poor families and their children may be found, keep household incomes below poverty threshold levels. Chronic conflicts and increased occurrence of disasters due to climate change likewise hinder children's access to basic services.

Recommendations

- Ensure that reducing child poverty is a priority in government agenda and included in the Philippine Development Plan. There should be clear national definitions and measurement of multidimensional child poverty. Children, especially the poor, should be given a voice.
 - Consider children's views and the specific impact and manifestations of poverty on children in the design, implementation and evaluation of social protection programs. Other than child and family grants, this can include child care, parenting support and responses to the impact of shocks and crises on families in poverty and their children.
 - Adopt an overall strategy backed by explicit policies, programs, standards and budgets to improve access to quality basic services for the poorest and most excluded children by reducing barriers that may be rooted in both monetary poverty and deeper discriminations and exclusion.
 - Ensure that economic growth benefits the poorest families and expand their opportunities for decent work and sustainable livelihoods.

Ending Child Hunger and Malnutrition (In Line with SDG 2)

Child malnutrition rates in the Philippines has declined but the country still has the highest prevalence of wasted children in Southeast Asia. Despite considerable investments in



nutrition and health programs, a significant number of children remains malnourished. In 2013, two out of 10 children aged 0-5 years were found to be underweight, 3 out of 10 were short for their age, while about 1 out of 10 were too thin for their age. (DOST-FNRI, 2012)

More underweight, stunted and wasted children are found among the poorest households. The Social Weather Stations 2015 survey (qtd in DOST-FNRI) reveals that 4 in 10 households surveyed with children less than 10 years old reported inability to provide their children nutritionally adequate meals because of lack of money to buy enough food, resulting in 23% of children under 10 years old being food insecure. Around 22% have skipped meals while 13% have experienced hunger, not having eaten in a day.

Despite initiatives to promote breastfeeding, only 48% practice exclusive breastfeeding for six months. Survey results imply that difficulty in accessing food, nutrition and health care services by mothers have impacts on children's health and nutrition. The 2011 Updating Nutritional Survey reveals that 25% of mothers are at risk of delivering low birth weight babies and face pregnancy complications because they themselves are underweight, or are not gaining the required gestational weight according to age. In particular, teenage mothers have higher risk of delivering low birth weight babies. (DOST-FNRI, 2011)

Recommendations

- Set a target for the reduction in stunting.
- Invest in cost-effective and affordable direct interventions – such as vitamin A and zinc supplements, iodized salt and the promotion of healthy behavior; including handwashing, exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices – that are proven to have a positive impact on children's and mothers' nutrition and health; invest in health and nutrition programs focusing on the first 1000 days in the life of an infant.
- Invest in strong social protection programs that will support pregnant and breastfeeding women, and children below two years old. Recruit, train, and support new and existing health workers, and deploy them where they are most needed.
- Support small-scale farmers and female farmers; ensure that making a positive impact on nutrition is an explicit objective of agriculture policies by focusing on projects designed to improve children's diet such as home gardening or education projects that focus on nutrition.

Raising the Alarm on Early Pregnancy and its Impact on Girls (In Line with SDG 3)

In several community-based and national consultations, children have raised early pregnancy as a pressing issue. Studies show that pregnancy among girls below 20 years old has increased by 65% in 2000-2010 (UP-DRDFI, 2014), and especially among adolescent girls (aged 10 to 19). This was attributed to the increasing number of adolescents having sexual intercourse, and the low usage of contraceptive and other forms of protection. The proportion of girls aged 15-19 who became mothers has doubled over the last ten years (from 6.3% in 2000 to 14% in 2013).

The 2011 Updating Nutritional Survey shows the impact of early pregnancy on the health and nutrition status of both the mother and the baby. Among pregnant mothers, 36% of those identified as nutritionally at risk were less than 20 years old; 14% of mothers gave birth to underweight babies and, of this number, 24% were assessed to have chronic energy deficiency.

Among women who were lactating at the time of the survey, 1 in 10 were underweight. (SCP, “Sizing Up,” 2015) Infant mortality rate is 30% higher for infants born to mothers aged 15 to 19 years than for women 20 years or older. Adolescent mothers also account for 20% of all maternal deaths, with 1,000 of these deaths being abortion related. (SCP *et.al.*, “Girl Child”, 2015, p. 7)

The high incidence of teen pregnancy has been attributed to the lack of comprehensive sexuality education and limited access to adolescent-friendly reproductive health services. Section 7 of the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 denies persons below 18 years old access to family planning information and services without parental consent, unless they are already a parent or has had a miscarriage. This is seen as a barrier to preventing early pregnancy especially since most parents do not discuss sex and reproductive health with their children, much less knowingly send them to the health center for information. Age- and development-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education is integrated in the school curriculum but its teaching is limited to adolescents in public schools, and only optional in private schools. (SCP *et.al.*, “Girl Child”, p. 8)

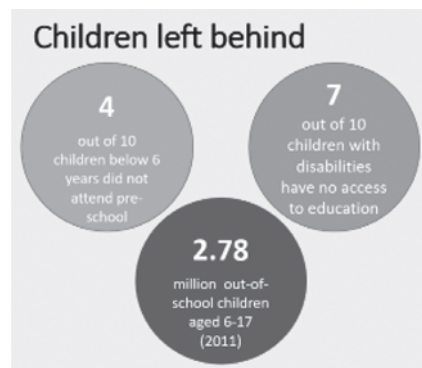
Recommendation

Remove legal barriers to girls’ and boys’ full access to sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV counselling and testing by amending the Responsible Parenting and Reproductive Health Law.

Ensuring Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Addressing the Barriers to Access to Education (In Line with SDG 4)

There has been an improvement in access to education through stronger policies and increased investments in education. The Kindergarten Act of 2012 and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 contributed to improving access to kindergarten -- now part of the basic education system -- and made pre-school for five-year-old children free, mandatory and compulsory. This resulted in increased net enrolment rate from 55% in School Year (SY) 2010-2011 to 77% in SY 2012-2013. Gross enrolment rate for kindergarten also increased from 76% to 103% for the same period. (DepEd, 2015, Fig. 3, 18) However, early childhood education remains elusive to children below six years old. While 90% of barangays have a day care center and the number of day care centers increased (51,797 in 2011 to 53,436 in 2013), these actually reach only 19.9% of the target population and a mere 3% of children with disabilities aged 4-6 years. (DepEd, p. 14)

High dropout rates and quality of education are also major issues. Children in marginalized communities, especially boys, face many barriers to completing their education. Going to school can be an ordeal for children whose families have been relocated to communities outside Metro Manila as a result of the National Government’s OPLAN Likas relocation program. (JJCICI and Save the Children Philippines, 2014) Children report having to walk three to four kilometers and spend considerably for transportation just to go to school, as primary and



secondary schools are still not found within relocations sites. Girls are exposed to risks as they have to walk along dark streets to commute to school. In some cases, children stop schooling for several days while their school records are being transferred. Relocation also often takes place in the middle of the school year, disrupting children's schooling.

Disasters and conflict also pose a threat to access to schools and also inhibit children's continuous education possibilities. In areas affected by Typhoon Haiyan, drops in school attendance rates among girls -- ranging from 3% to as high as 78% -- were observed, mainly due to the damaged schools, the need to improve physical safety, and the lack of teachers. (SCP et.al., p. 6) Small-scale flooding events, which happen regularly in many places in Metro Manila, also disrupt children's education and may have long-term effects on children's learning outcomes. In the case of armed conflict, schools are subject to attack by armed groups and are sometimes damaged in the crossfire between armed groups and the military. Children with disabilities continue to be left behind, with around two (2) million children with disabilities aged 5-14 years old having no access to education.

While there is marked increase in budget allocation for education, there is still a lack of school facilities in remote, rural areas. DepEd policy (Department Order 40 s. 2014) requires at least 100 pupils or students before a school can be established, and in areas where this criterion is not met, children will have to travel several kilometers to reach the nearest school. There is also lack of availability of teachers in these remote areas. Meanwhile, there are still congested classrooms especially in the National Capital Region and in highly urbanized cities.

Recommendations

- Reduce dropout rates by designing and implementing strategic and integrated programs that will address the underlying causes of dropping out (such as lack of preparatory training for formal school, high cost of education, inaccessibility of schools, child labor, involvement of children in armed conflict, early marriage, early pregnancy, and displacement due to conflict, migration, urban relocation and disasters).
- Increase investment in appropriate flexible learning systems to reach the still unreached children in remote, rural areas, in armed-conflict areas or those affected by disasters, the working children, children in conflict with the law and street children. Improve the design and quality of alternative learning systems. Provide continuous learning options so that children can continue to learn even during times of displacement and when they are unable to attend school.
- Strengthen and prioritize early childhood education programs, especially for children below six years old, which should have a complementary parenting education program to enable children to have the proper support at home.
- Improve the inclusivity of the public education system towards children with disabilities by establishing inclusive learning environments. This entails instituting adjustments or modifications in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies, classroom setup and school facilities to accommodate children's special needs and conditions.

Eliminating Early Marriage among Girls in Indigenous and Muslim Communities (In Line with SDG 5)

Harmful traditional practices still prevail and continue to hinder the protection of girls from abuse, violence and discrimination. Girls from indigenous and Muslim communities are

faced with prospects of early, arranged marriages. Although the minimum age of marriage has been set by law at 18 for both males and females (Article 5, Family Code), children are being married off before this age as this is allowed under indigenous customary laws (Sections 15 and 65-70, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act) and in the Code of Muslim Personal Laws (Articles 137-159). A study on early marriage in Region 12 found that the average age of marriage for females was around 13 years due to the practice of giving a baby girl away to a man as repayment for a loan (*buya*) or marrying a girl to an older man with wealth to assure a high dowry (*sunggud*). (Cagoco-Guiam, 2013) Child marriage was found to have impacts on girls' health and education, and to expose them to risks of rape and other forms of abuse and exploitation.



Early marriage is supported by the Code of Muslim Personal Laws, which allows the betrothal and marriage of children at age of puberty set at 15 years old. But for girls, they can already contract marriage even earlier than 15 (but not lower than 12 years old) if they have attained puberty. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) also support this practice. The Magna Carta of Women, however, considers betrothal or marriage of a child as having no legal effect.

Recommendations

- Remove legal barriers to eliminating child marriages by amending the Code of Muslim Personal Laws and the IPRA.
- Raise awareness among Muslim and tribal leaders, indigenous people's communities, parents and children about the negative impacts of early marriage on children, especially girls.

Transforming Cities and Humans Settlements into Safe and Protective Environments for Children (In Line with SDG 11)

In response to flooding in the metropolis, which was blamed on informal settlements along riverbanks that clogged the waterways, the National Government allocated ₱10 billion annually in 2012-2016 for the transfer of some 60,000 families living along the waterways, and the construction of in-city high-density housing projects for informal settlers. However, the program relocated the majority of the families in off-city resettlement projects. Stories by families, both to be relocated and already relocated, suggest considerable lack of preparation and consultation in the conduct of relocation, as well as experiences of further impoverishment and marginalization.

A study on the impact of relocation showed how children's daily lives are affected, specifically their access to basic services and to public utilities; increased tendency for dropping out; higher transport costs because of distance to schools, markets and livelihoods; exposure to risks from having to walk along highways and unlit streets; bullying and discrimination; and

child protection issues such as sexual abuse (due to unsafe streets) and child labor. (JJCICSI and Save the Children Philippines, 2014) Relocation also threatens sources of income of already vulnerable families. There is limited access to economic opportunities for parents and even for young people graduating from high school. Older children work to help augment the income of the family by working in construction sites, and by scavenging.

Communities, and especially children, have limited information on and participation in the urban relocation processes. Planning and coordination between the sending and receiving local government units (LGUs) and agencies are also very weak. Resettlement sites are not adequately prepared to receive relocated families (basic utilities and security measures are not in place; increased demand for services are not anticipated). There is inadequate assistance to families so that they can have access to jobs and livelihoods, and mitigate economic stresses. Receiving communities are observed to be hostile and have negative perceptions about the relocatees. Within the relocation areas, children and young people have no spaces for participation. The development of safe and resilient communities for the urban poor is also challenged by the lack of safe spaces within or near the city where the informal settlers originally resided. Thus, the government often resorts to off-city resettlement sites that are too far from the original communities. Some in-city relocation areas were found to be vulnerable to flooding and landslides.

Recommendations

- Amend the Urban and Development Housing Act to include the mandatory conduct of a child rights impact assessment before developing a relocation plan, and requiring the participation of children and people's organizations in the planning, implementation and evaluation of relocation programs.
- Ensure that the national strategic plan on urban development is based on a risk assessment specifically designed for an urban context, and which identifies the potential harmful effects of relocation on children and how these can be prevented or mitigated. The plan should include children's participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of relocation programs, and regular dialogues wherein good practices and issues in the implementations of relocation programs can be discussed with NGOs and children.
- Tighten coordination within local inter-agency committees in the sending and receiving communities. Adopt policies and protocols that will guide the coordination between the receiving and sending LGUs to ensure the continued delivery of basic services especially for children. Strengthen the role of the agencies concerned with children, especially the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Education.
- Undertake participatory processes that involve national government, LGUs, CSOs and children in formulating budgets for relocation programs. Each government agency should take the lead in developing itemized budgets for infrastructure and delivery of services in relocation sites.
- Conduct post-disaster needs assessments directly with children, including children with disabilities, after every major disaster and consider their inputs in the design and implementation of humanitarian response. There is also a need to ensure that data on children are disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, and disability, among others.
- Consult children at key phases of the humanitarian response and enact a policy to secure children's representation in the local Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) councils. There is also a need to strengthen children's participation in DRR activities.

Eliminating All Forms of Violence against Girls and Boys (In Line with SDG 16)

Children continue to experience various forms of violence, including inside the home. The preliminary findings of the National Baseline Study on Violence against Children reveals that physical violence is the most common type of violence experienced by Filipino children with 2 out of 3 children and slightly more boys experiencing this. Spanking is the most common type of physical violence. Mothers/stepmothers are the most common perpetrators of “milder” forms of physical violence and fathers/stepfathers, of severe physical violence in the home. (Ramiro, 2016) Meanwhile, 3 out of 5 children (slightly among girls) experience psychological violence mostly at home, and 1 in 4 children experience sexual violence mostly in the context of dating and in the home. Surprisingly, there are more boys who experience sexual abuse compared to girls. The study also reported that 3 in 5 children experience peer violence or bullying; most were girls who were teased for their physical appearance, status and skin color. Almost half (48.5%) of children, mostly boys, experience cyber violence.

The continued use of corporal punishment perpetuates the cycle of violence and leads to long-term effects on children’s development and well-being. Children are not given equal protection under the law against physical assault which affects their physical integrity and dignity as rights holders. In a Pulse Asia survey in 2011, two in three parents admitted that they use corporal punishment to discipline their children aged 0 to 16. Spanking the bottom (52%) is the most prevalent form of corporal punishment used. (Pulse Asia, 2011)



85% of children said that they are being punished inside the home; around 2 out of 3 parents say they use corporal punishment as a form of discipline.

Child labor is also still a prevailing issue. Around 19% (5.5 million) of the population of children 5-17 years old are working children. Among them, 54.5% (2.9 million) are in hazardous work environments, 62% are in the agriculture sector and 30% are in the service sector. Two-thirds of them are boys. (Institute of Philippine Culture, 2014)

Gaps in existing laws fail to fully protect children from violence. The Family Code, the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Anti-Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, and the Revised Penal Code endorse the use of corporal punishment if “reasonable in manner and moderate in degree,” and is not cruel and excessive. These justifications can so easily be abused and do discriminate against young girls and boys, denying them equal protection in the law against physical assault. The Anti-Rape Law sets the minimum age for statutory rape at 12 years old, denying the same protection for older children.

Moreover, most protection laws are not fully implemented. There is a lack of awareness of these laws among service providers and local government units (LGUs), who are responsible for delivering child protection services. There is an absence of an integrated national system for data collection and monitoring, while such systems are totally lacking at the local level. There is also weak coordination among agencies and departments/offices providing child protection and related services. At the local level, not all communities have functional Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPC), the primary structure to implement programs to prevent, monitor and respond to violence against children. The absence of active LCPCs serves as a barrier for children survivors of violence, including trafficked children, from accessing services and getting justice. After every election, most of these structures are dissolved or become non-functional, especially in areas where there was a change in the political leadership. With the three-year term of office of local officials, LCPCs constantly face the issue of sustainability.

(SCP et.al., p. 10) LGUs apparently do not have the capacity to address the issues that came out of the National Baseline Study. They are not aware of children's rights nor the need for child protection mechanisms, nor are they deploying enough social workers. (Ramiro, 2016) LCPCs that are functional seldom have an integrated program of action nor the budget for relevant activities; the budget of 1% of the Internal Revenue Allotment for children as mandated by law is not being used to combat child abuse and neglect.

The chronic conflict in Mindanao also has short- and long-term negative consequences for children. In a consultation in 2014, children blamed the conflict for their poverty, as conflict has caused their parents to lose their livelihoods. (Mindanao Tulong Bakwet, 2014) With no income, parents are unable to provide their children with their basic needs. Children are forced to work after school, or even have to totally give up their schooling. The conflict also caused intense fear among the children. They were not able to go to school, study or play because it was not safe. Due to their frequent displacement and evacuation, children constantly fear being separated from their families.

Recommendations

- Pass and/or implement child protection-related laws and policies accompanied by adequate budget and staffing. Pass a law prohibiting corporal punishment in all settings including the home; setting a higher minimum age for statutory rape; and institutionalizing children's meaningful participation in governance.
- Congress should exercise its oversight function by proactively assessing the impact of existing laws on children's rights and best interest, looking at the long-term consequences and impacts on girls' and boys' health and education, and taking into consideration children's viewpoints. Congress needs to adopt a process of determining and assessing, with the meaningful involvement of children, the potential impacts of proposed laws on children before these are enacted.
- Immediately ratify the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OPIC) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which will allow children to submit complaints regarding specific violations of their rights under the Convention and its first two optional protocols. OPIC will further strengthen domestic legal frameworks and justice systems, and ensure that the violations of the rights of children are addressed.
- Make child protection information and services accessible to children and their families at the community level, and allocate budgets for child protection prevention and response services and mechanisms.
- Ensure the coordination of different actors including service providers in delivering child protection services, such as ensuring the effective functioning of LCPCs at all levels. Build the capacity of child protection workers to recognize the signs of violence and to effectively respond, and the capacity of



service providers to provide quality child protection services.

- Consider the children's concerns and consult children in the peace process between government and armed groups.
- Pass the bill on the rights of children in situations of armed conflict.
- Set up mechanisms to protect the rights of children in situations of armed conflict, disaster and temporary displacement; ensure programs are in place and services made accessible to them including continued access to quality education, health, child protection and social welfare services, and to rehabilitation and reintegration programs; ensure that they are protected from any threat to their lives, from all forms of abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation, including recruitment into armed groups.

The status of children should be considered as an important measure of the extent to which the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being achieved. Poverty, natural hazards, climate change, conflict, migration and urbanization were proven to have a disproportionate and often negative impact on children. Thus, it is important to recognize children as persons of rights, address children's vulnerabilities and marginalization, and have their voices heard and considered in the decisions that affect their lives within the framework of the SDGs. With the recognition of the long-term impacts of broad concerns on children, the achievement of the SDGs will help create a safe, protective and nurturing world for children now and for their future.

End Notes

¹ Wasting is defined by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) as "a condition where the child's weight is lower than that of a normal child of the same height. This condition serves as an indicator of acute malnutrition."

² Net enrolment rate

³ Gross enrollment rate

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SDGs: A silver lining for the graying Philippine population

*By Coalition of Services of the Elderly, Inc**



In a country where approximately 80percent of the older population is poor, certain basic issues need to be addressed in order to ensure a more humane existence for its marginalized aging sector, and not leave them the furthest behind.

According to data from World Population Prospects: the 2015 Revision (United Nations, 2015), the number of older persons – those aged 60 years and over – has increased substantially in recent years in most countries and regions, and that growth is projected to accelerate in the coming decades. Between 2015 and 2030, the number of people in the world aged 60 years or over is projected to grow by 56 percent, from 901 million to 1.4 billion. In 2050, for the first time in human history, there will be more persons over 60 than children in the world - more than one in five of the world's population will be aged 60 or older. (United Nations, 2015)

In the Philippines, the aging sector only accounted for 4.6 million or 5.97percent of the total population in 2000, versus 6.3 million or 6.8percent in 2010. While aging prevalence in the Philippines is relatively low, this will continue to increase, and is predicted by demographers to reach double digits in 2020.

* Coalition of Services of the Elderly, Inc. (COSE) is a non-government organization working with and for older persons, especially the most disadvantaged ones, in urban and rural areas in the Philippines to address issues of poverty, exclusion, and invisibility so they may live in dignity.

Although, population aging may be considered as one of humanity's greatest triumphs and poised to become one of the "most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century" (United Nations, 2015) -- reflecting as it does increased life expectancy -- what can older people expect from the society they helped build all their lives? What is in store for our fathers, mothers, grandparents, older individuals and even those among us who are approaching older age?

Human rights are supposed to be universal and therefore older people should be enjoying these rights on an equal basis with others in society. The Philippines has ratified nine international human rights treaties and all of these, with the exception of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, apply to older people as much as they apply to others. Older people's human rights do not diminish nor disappear with older age. They still have the same rights as everybody else.

Despite this, more often than not, we see older persons with very much reduced chances of employment and less and unequal access to adequate healthcare and financial services. They become subjects of discrimination, ridicule, and even abuse. Some consider them merely as objects of charity and not individuals with inherent, equal and universal rights as other members of society.

The new sustainable development agenda, Agenda 2030, promises hope, optimism and confidence in a brighter future not only for older persons but for all people of all ages. No target will be considered met unless met for all – this means people of all ages. (Stakeholder Group on Aging, 2015) It is not business-as-usual. It is a universal promise and a commitment to ensure that each and every person across her or his life course lives in security, without fear, without despair, without discrimination.

At the same time, preparing for the economic and social shifts associated with an aging population is thus essential to ensure progress in development, including towards the achievement of the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Population aging is particularly relevant for the goals on poverty eradication, ensuring healthy lives and well-being at all ages, promoting gender equality and full and productive employment and decent work for all, reducing inequalities between and within countries, and making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. (United Nations, 2015)

Thus, COSE together with Stakeholder Group on Aging, advocates tirelessly for inclusion of older persons in the development agenda not only because older persons have rights too; not only because older persons count and should be counted; not only because they have voices and should be visible; not only because they are significant contributors to the economy; not only because they are the unsung heroes of their communities. We are also advocating inclusion of older persons because we want our children and our young people to live a long and fruitful life and prosper with dignity throughout their life-course. We want all to experience a lifelong journey that is filled with optimism and hope. Life's journey is from cradle to grave. (Stakeholder Group on Aging, Position Paper, 2015)

WHERE ARE WE?

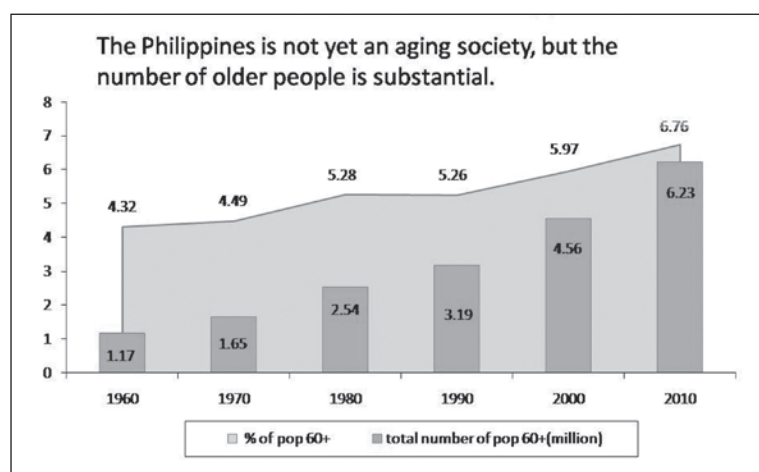
This section discusses the present trends in the demographic characteristics of the older population in the Philippines and the challenges posed by the growth in the number and share of older persons in the population on efforts to eradicate poverty and to grow the economy, to ensure the sustainability of pension systems, and to promote health and well-being at all ages. The issues highlighted in this section underscore just how critical the concerns of older persons are for progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Demography of Older Persons in the Philippines

Population ageing

All over the world, the human population is aging, and the Philippines is no exception. Older persons or persons aged 60 years and above (more locally tagged as Senior Citizens) in the Philippines are increasing both in absolute numbers and in proportion to our overall population. Based on the 2010 Philippine census, there are now 6.23 million older persons representing about 6.76 percent of total population. As early as 1960s, the growth of the older population sector, already exceeded that of the general population. (Cruz, Camhol, 2014) percent Figure 1 illustrates the increasing trend of the older population in the Philippines from year 1960 to 2010. The expected trend toward the graying of the country's population, although the demographic transition will be slow, will be brought about by the combined effects of declining fertility and mortality levels. While the aging prevalence in the Philippines is relatively low, it is expected to assume prominence in the future with the number of the population who are over 60 reaching double digits in 2020 under the assumption of a moderate fertility and mortality decline. (Cruz, Camhol, 2014)

Figure 1. Increasing trend of older persons in the Philippines, 1960-2010



Source: Census, 1960-1980 (total population), 1990-2010 (household population)

It is worth noting, that by the end of 2030, it is projected that older persons' share to the total population will reach 11.4percent, accounting for 14.2 million people. (PSA, 2010)

Life Expectancy

Among our senior citizens, females (55.8 percent) outnumber the males (44.2 percent). (PCW, "Population", 2014) Women outlive men. The life expectancy of a Filipino man is 67.3 years and the life expectancy of a Filipino woman is 72.9 years. Although, for the period 2010 to 2020, the life expectancy of a Filipino man is expected to increase by 2.5 years while the life expectancy of the Filipino woman is expected to increase by 1.9 years. (NSCB, 2016) Life expectancy at age 60 (Cruz, 2014) shows a slightly smaller gender difference, with women who have reached the age of 60 expecting to live to 80, and men to 76.5 years old.

Major issues confronting Older Filipinos

Poverty in old age

Based on Philippine Statistics Authority, the older persons or senior citizen sector's poverty incidence registered at 16.9percent in 2006, 16.1percent in 2009, and 16.2percent in 2012. (PSA,2014) There were about one million poor senior citizens in 2006. In 2009 the number of poor senior citizens slightly increased to 1.2 million. They comprise 4.7percent of the 22.2 million total underprivileged population in 2006 and 5.10percent of the 23.1 million total, underprivileged population in 2009. (NSCB, 2016)

However, according to Social Pension Management Office (SPMO) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the number of indigent senior citizens numbered 2,809,542 as of April 2016 or a much higher 38percent of the projected older population in 2015 (7.6 million).

Moreover, the 2007 Philippine Study on Aging revealed that most senior citizens only have a few assets to their name, with most pointing to the house they currently live in, including the appliances therein. Some have farms and fishponds. Very few have bank accounts and a significant proportion recorded some liabilities, mostly personal loans and loans from money lenders. (Cruz, "Changing", 2014)

Both older women and men report that their income from all sources, including remittances, is inadequate. (Devasahayam, 2014, p. 309) In a self-assessment of their current household income versus household expenses, 20percent said they had considerable difficulty in meeting expenses and 33percent said they had some difficulty. Only 7percent said there is enough income with some money left over. (Cruz, *et al.* 2016)

Migration of traditional caregivers

The Philippines is proportionately the number one labor-sending country in the world. In 2011, 10 million or roughly 10percent of the country's total population were labor migrants to 200 countries worldwide, mostly comprising of the young and the female. (Commission on OFWs, 2014) In summary, about a fourth of older persons have at least one child living or working abroad. (Cruz, *et al.* 2016) International labor migration and the demand for care labor in advanced countries (particularly for Filipino women), have resulted in the absence of the

main actors in a significant number of families who could have provided care and attention to family members including the older persons.

Poor health and access to healthcare

Health concerns among our senior citizens become more acute in poor economic settings like the Philippines, where formal healthcare systems are still underdeveloped and our senior citizens rely heavily on informal sources, provided by their families for their health needs. Thus, while we welcome increasing survival rate as exhibited by longer life expectancy, additional years may mean longer life and worsening health and therefore greater financial burden for senior citizens. (Cruz, “Changing Health Status”, 2014)

A study was conducted to measure other dimension of health of senior citizens -- using their functional ability, which can be measured through the Activities of Daily Living (ADL). This is one of the most widely used measures in the study of disability among older populations. Results would show that at least 15 percent reported difficulty in performing at least one ADL. (Cruz et.al., “Changing Social Structures, 2009)

Data further showed that older people experienced greatest difficulty in standing or sitting on a chair or bed, going outside the house, and walking. The difficulty is higher among females than males. An age pattern was also apparent such that the level of disability significantly increased as age increased, with noted dramatic increase in disability at age 80 years and above. However, functional health is improving over time as shown by the decline between 1996 and 2007 of the proportion who reported difficulty in performing ADL activities.

Health status can be assessed not only by the number but also the quality of their remaining years. This can be measured by the Active Life Expectancy (ALE), which examines the number and proportion of the remaining life lived without disability. This method dissects the remaining life into years spent in active states. This is an indicator of quality of life.

Philippine data shows that female senior citizens have an advantage in terms of the number of years lived, but they experience greater disability than the male senior citizens. The finding is consistent with what has long been established by gerontologists. They found clear gender differentials, with the female experiencing fairly longer lives than males but with greater proportion of their remaining lives experiencing disability. (Cruz, “Health Transitions”, 1995)

Other indicators of health status are sleep patterns, vision, hearing, and oral health. With regard to their sleep patterns, senior citizens are satisfied generally, but males experience less sleep problems than females. There were 6.9 percent males vs 5.5 percent females who experienced loss of vision with at least one eye. There are also those who lost hearing with at least one ear, of which 7.5 percent were males and 7.3 percent females, mostly in ages 80 years and above. Oral health is important because people necessarily have to chew at least some of the food they eat to be nourished. Their oral health care is poor as there is low number of remaining teeth especially in females.

Mental health is also an issue of concern for both older men and women and is currently an un-met health need. According to the data, 1 in 4 older people are depressed. This has been linked to poor health, lack of awareness among healthcare providers, older people themselves, their families and their care providers. (Cruz, *et al.* 2016)

Another measure of older people’s enjoyment of their right to health is their access to health insurance. The Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth), as the national health insurance company, provides the widest coverage of healthcare insurance for senior citizens. But much of the benefit is availed of only for actual hospitalization and not much for out-patient services

or primary care settings. Besides limited insurance cover for certain types of morbidity, there are also ceilings or prescribed case rates for specific illnesses or medical procedures.

Essential medicines are often unaffordable for older people. Despite discounts in the purchase of medicines, as mentioned above, it is those who are already in a position to afford the medicine who benefit from this privilege. It has no beneficial effect on those who cannot afford to buy medication. (Devasayaham, 2014, p. 290) Based on the Impact Evaluation of RA 9994 on Drug Accessibility (Salenga, 2015), 42 percent of drugstore personnel interviewed said that senior citizens are still not able to buy their medicines completely because of low incomes (or limited financial ability) and higher costs of medicines. Furthermore, of all the senior citizens surveyed, less than 50 percent indicated that they were able to buy all their needed medications. Adherence to regimen as a result of the provisions of the law was at a low 54 percent. This was observed among respondents who have had schooling beyond elementary education. Some drugstores, especially the small ones that feel they cannot afford to allow the full discounts mandated by law, resort to certain schemes to get around the law. Examples of such tricks include jacking up the prices in such a way as to cover up for the reduced profits or telling senior citizens they do not have stocks available and referring them back to the big chain drugstores. (Salenga, 2015) This has significant implications on the enjoyment of the right to health of the most disadvantaged older people who cannot afford the essential medication that they need.

Lack of employment/work opportunities

Based on the 2007 census, 3.2 million of the total household population is headed by senior citizens. Out of this, 66.8 percent or 2,156,957 are headed by male senior citizens and 33.2 percent or 1,072,460 are headed by female senior citizens. This may be because the Philippines is still predominantly a “patriarchal” society. It may also be dictated by the fact that previous generations provided more educational and skills training opportunities for males than females who were merely expected to marry, have children, stay at home and maintain the household.

Of the 2,225,373 senior citizens with occupations 47.2 percent were males and only 33.1 percent were females. (NSO, 2007)

However, of the total senior citizen working population, the majority are involved in low paying jobs. Out of 2,225,373 working senior citizens, 61 percent of the male workers, and 25 percent of the female workers are involved in agricultural or fisheries work, either as farmers, forestry workers or fisherfolks. (NCSR,) Furthermore, the 2007 Philippine Study of Aging (PSOA) revealed that 33percent working male senior citizens and 69percent female working senior citizens are involved in blue collar work. Although older persons derive income from two sources on the average, the median monthly income is meager, registering P3000 per month, barely breaching poverty thresholds.

The Philippine Study of Aging (PSOA) 2007 data shows that out of the 39 percent working senior citizens only 29 percent actually receive earnings from work. This implies that about a third of those working are unpaid.

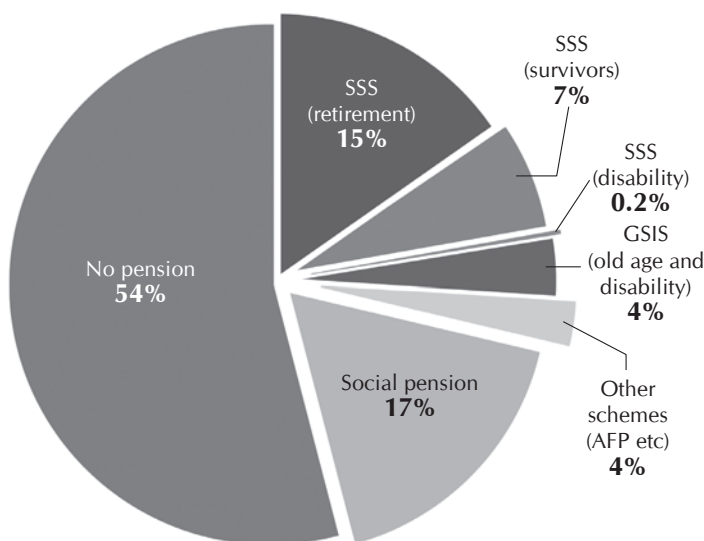
Lack of decent and living pensions (and social protection)

The majority of Filipinos currently cannot expect to receive a pension in their old age. As shown in Figure 2, a little over a quarter of senior citizens or 29 percent of their population receive pension based on their previous working history (SSS, GSIS and others) with an

additional 17 percent of older people (1.4 million) in receipt of social pension by the end of 2016. Even when all of these schemes are combined, over half of Filipino older people (at least 54 percent) are left with no pension at all. For many of those in receipt of a pension, benefits can be low – and this is not only limited to social pensioners. A third of SSS retirees (34 percent) receive less than PhP 2,000 per month (about USD 43), and half (52 percent) receive less than PhP 3,000 per month (about USD 65).

Figure 2: Over half of senior citizens receive no pension at all

Estimated coverage of the population 60 years and over by type of pension



Older persons as subject of abuse and violence

A key issue is the invisibility of elder abuse. This is compounded by the lack of data and low awareness that it is happening. A study in 2004 found that 40 percent of respondents had personal experience of elder abuse, the most common type experienced being verbal abuse and the most common perpetrators being children followed by other family members. The types of abuse range from physical and verbal abuse, ridicule and discrimination, dependency of family members on elder people and even negligence. Of those who experienced abuse only 2 percent reported it to the authorities, which clearly suggests that abuse is being perpetrated with impunity. An estimated 11 percent of victims turned to family for support but 21 percent sought no support or refuge. (Co, 2014)

More recently the Philippine Commission on Women recommended that attention must be given to violence and abuse against senior women. They noted that it is not uncommon in the Philippines to find elderly women experiencing abuse and violence from family members, including being abandoned and forced to live on the streets. The Magna Carta for Women mandates the reporting of all suspected cases of abuse or neglect of elderly women, in accordance with the law. For the period 2006–2010, DSWD recorded 4,332 cases of elderly women in need of special protection. Of these, almost three-fourths (or 3,174) were served in the 17 crisis intervention units of DSWD. (PCW, “Gender Equality Plan”, p. 138)

WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES IN ACHIEVING THE SDGS?

• *Ageism and age discrimination*

Despite traditions of respect for elders, ageism (negative stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes and behavior towards older people and older age) is evident across Filipino society. It is often invisible and is rarely recognized or acknowledged. It manifests itself in different ways.

Many visual and graphic portrayals of the elderly show them as weak, sickly or frail, physically impaired, slow moving individuals with limited mobility. This depiction only reinforces the idea that older people are no longer healthy, active or productive. Such generalization is not only unfair, it is untrue since many aging persons maintain their health and vitality, and prove that older people can still have active lifestyles. However, this misconception has relegated older people to the margins of Philippine society – no longer hired for jobs, kept home-bound by family members, not picked up by public transports, etc.

Media does not help but sometimes even contributes to this negative stereotype of the elderly in films, television shows, and even commercial advertisements. It is rare to see positive depictions of the elderly as strong, active, and productive individuals. Thus, the general attitude towards older people is negative and discriminatory, limiting their employment opportunities, access to healthcare, as well as loans or financial services.

Older people may also be subjected to discrimination on the basis of their advanced age, in combination with one or more other factors. According to the Philippine Commission on Women, the most disadvantaged and marginalized senior citizens are senior women from urban slums, rural areas, IP communities, and Muslim communities; senior women in detention; senior women who live alone; and senior gay men, lesbians, and transgender persons who live alone. (PCW, “Gender Equality Plan”, p. 135)

• *Invisibility in mainstream statistics*

Complicating the picture is that some issues of critical concern for older persons are not easily captured nor quantifiable using mainstream statistics. Age-exclusive surveys must be changed. For example, Target 3.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals on universal health coverage uses an indicator to measure coverage of the interventions, that include hypertension and diabetes -- key health concerns for older people. However, currently available data sources for these measures from population-based surveys use upper age limits, meaning there is no data being generated beyond certain cut-off ages.

• *Lack of strong institutional monitoring system for older person’s welfare*

Amongst the elderly sector’s obvious institutional gaps is the lack of a primary agency looking after their interests. Unlike other sectors which have their own policy-making and monitoring body, senior citizens only have an inter-agency board whose responsibility centers around the implementation of RA 9994 on Drugs Accessibility and does not really extend to emerging issues or other policy concerns outside the mandate of RA 9994. This institutional limitation affects the implementation of a variety of programs and services and/or its alignment with sectoral plans and policies for lack of central leadership and coordination.

WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS?

Aging is both an opportunity and a challenge. To leave no older person the furthest behind, we recommend the following:

1. Recognize that population aging is a success, not a burden. Older persons and people with disabilities are also vibrant and productive members of society. Population aging should be considered a worldwide trend and related cross-cutting issues must be taken into account across all goals and targets;
2. Full age disaggregation is essential across all goal areas together with sex disaggregation. Age and sex disaggregation will illuminate the unique and often invisible intersectional and cumulative discrimination faced by women in older age and other sectors. We call to reject the blanket cohort of 60 or 65 + to measure outcomes for older persons and use the existing UNDESA recommendation to disaggregate by 5 year bands from age 60 onwards.
3. Alongside other marginalized groups, older persons must be included in the formal implementation processes, systematically engaged, involved in consultations, provided timely and relevant information and ensured participation in the mechanisms for planning, monitoring, review and reporting.

Ageism must end now. After all, everyone who does not die young is sure to grow old. Then, we will all benefit from what older persons are fighting for now.

End Notes

- ¹ Life course as a concept, refers to the socially defined events and roles that the individual enacts over time, which do not necessarily proceed in a given sequence, but rather constitute the sum total of the person's actual experiences.
- ² Stakeholder Group on Aging is a strong and effective advocacy partnership that brings together global and national networks of organizations concerned with issues of aging.
- ³ NSCB- Technical staff special computation using 2000 Census-based Life expectancy at birth of the NSO, cited in the Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens 2012-2016.
- ⁴ According to RA 9994 or Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, Indigent Senior Citizen refers to "any elderly who is frail, sickly, or with disability, and without pension or regular source of income, compensation or financial assistance from his/her relatives to support his/her basic needs, as determined by the DSWD in consultation with the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB)."
- ⁵ As of November 2012, the NSO 2010 census on population data on households headed by senior citizens was not yet available, cited in Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens, 2012-2016.
- ⁶ Based on RA 9994, "pursuant to the eligibility criteria as may be determined by the DSWD, indigent senior citizens shall be entitled to a monthly stipend amounting to Five hundred pesos (Php 500.00) to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs of senior citizens."
- ⁷ Given that some older people may be in receipt of more than one type of pension, total coverage may be lower in reality.

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Do not leave us (again)!

*By Abner Manlapaz, Liza Martinez, Benjamin Bernandino**

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Parallel Report produced in 2013 by the Philippine Coalition on the UNCRPD) documents how persons with disabilities languish in a disadvantaged situation. In most instances, persons with disabilities are not visible in data collection and reporting. For the longest time, our society has remained unaware of the inequalities being perpetuated by laws and policies that do not address structural barriers, hindering full inclusion and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society.

“If you’re not counted, you don’t count!”

In most situations, decisions are based on what is known. The available data tells the narrative. Persons with disabilities are rarely counted in different levels of government data collection. In the 2000 census 942,098 or 1.23percent (PSA, 2010 Census) of the total population of the Philippines were reported as having disabilities. Using the same survey instruments, the latest census (2010) reported that 1.57 percent or 1.443 million of the population were with some form of disability. (PSA, 2010 Census) These results are suspect and are not reflective of the results generated in the World Report on Disability (WHO and WB, 2011), putting into question the effectivity of the tool we have been using to better capture the numbers.. The World Report on Disability states that there is 15.6percent worldwide prevalence rate of disability for ages 18 and above.

If data is not collected using the best available data collection tools, many persons with disabilities (PWDs) will be left out and national laws and policies will only give token



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consideration for them. There will not be enough political will to allocate sufficient funds to implement International laws and commitments. In these ways, the State continuously creates and enlarges the inequalities that person with disabilities are experiencing. Unless the State takes appropriate actions, perpetuation of inequalities in poverty reduction programs, education, access to health care services, livelihood and employment, social protection programs, and many others will continue to exist.

Higher cost of living and higher cost of participation for person with disabilities

Persons with disabilities face many structural barriers that prevent them from fully benefitting from any progress in development goals. According to the World Report on Disability, persons with disabilities have poorer health outcomes; lower educational achievements; less economic participation; higher rates of poverty; and have increased dependency and restricted participation. Such barriers are encountered on a daily basis when trying to access the physical environment, transportation, information, and communication. Moreover, persons with disabilities have limited access to quality and affordable rehabilitation and habilitation services; assistive devices and technology; support services such as personal assistance service, sign language interpretation service; and other live assistance. All these needs entail costs that would have to be shouldered by PWDs and their families.

Everyone needs to spend to participate in the social, economic, cultural or political life -- or to access services. But PWDs need to spend more compared to the general population to be able to do this. For example, there is attendant cost to be able to work. Imagine a person with disability, having to use a wheelchair and spending US\$15 for transportation in order to earn US\$12. There is a constant struggle when participating in different socio-economic activities. In fact, most persons with disabilities will just give up the idea of participating because it is so costly for them. Depending on the type of disability of a person, she or he will need to spend large amount of money in order to live in dignity as everyone else.

Poverty and inequality more pronounced

Poverty incidence is higher among persons with disabilities compared to the general population, ranging from 30 percent to 60 percent in selected cities and municipalities in urban and rural areas is 30% to 60% (Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par. 240) In a published discussion paper, the National Capital Region (NCR) poverty incidence for the whole population is less than 3percent, whereas among persons with disabilities in the region, it is markedly higher at 40percent (PIDS, 2009) In the rural area of Rosario, Batangas, for instance, poverty incidence among PWDs is a high 60percent compared to the 10percent for the general population in this local area. (PIDS, 2011)

The poverty definition in the Philippines does not take into account the disability-related expenses of PWDs. Allocating for such needs may drag PWDs and their families below the poverty line If they are already poor, they become even more impoverished. Persons with disabilities and their families are in a quandary when making economic decisions to survive. A PWD may potentially earn income to defray her or his costs of living, but if this means spending US\$15 to earn just US\$12, what is the sense in that?, It may be better to stop working. In either situation, the PWDs, probably their family as well, will remain poor.

Budget Allocations in support of person with disabilities

Research done by this Coalition reflect the top spenders in 2011 to be the national government agencies on Health, Education and Social Welfare and Development, amounting to only about 0.1percent of national appropriations, and 0.02percent of the GDP.

Health services: inaccessible and discriminatory

Persons with disabilities continue to face barriers in accessing health care services. Aside from accessibility issues, they continue to experience discrimination in getting health insurance to make health care services affordable for them. The various programs of government to subsidize health insurance premiums exclude persons with disabilities who are left out of the poverty targeting system because disability-related expenses are not considered. (Phil. Coalition for UNCRPD, par. 213) In some cases, persons with disabilities experience discriminatory practices because medical professionals lack awareness of the rights of PWDs. Of particular concern is institutionalization in mental health hospitals and medical facilities with consequent disregard of the right to liberty, as well as physical and mental integrity, for persons with psychosocial or intellectual / developmental disabilities.

Education not inclusive enough

Looking at the education situation of persons with disabilities, the CRPD Parallel Report (Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par 192) cited a 2004-2005 report of the Department of Education where at least 98percent of children with special needs are not in school. This is significantly large in comparison to 18percent rate for all children in school year 2006-2007.

Studies show that a low level of education is directly related to being poor. Continuous exclusion of persons with disabilities in the educational system will result in failure to end poverty among them. The State needs to seriously consider how to make the current education system inclusive as the policies in place are either lacking or not implemented well, and do not . guarantee that children with disabilities will be able to enroll, attend, and finish primary and secondary education.

Non-compliant infrastructure hinders participation

Schools, government buildings, public spaces, recreation, entertainment and sports complexes, pedestrian pathways and crossings, and thoroughfares are not accessible from the point of view of persons with disabilities (Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par. 82). Despite, passage of the Accessibility Law more than three decades ago, and the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities more than two decades ago, the State has failed to ensure a barrier-free society. This poses a huge impact on the participation level of persons with disabilities. Accessibility is prerequisite to full inclusion and effective participation. Poor accessibility has resulted in PWDs being unable to enjoy the exercise of all their human rights. Ensuring accessibility of the physical environment (e.g. government buildings, private establishment open to the public, sidewalks, pedestrian crossing, etc.), public transportation, information (e.g. the tri-media and communication), health care service providers, etc. will raise the participation and inclusion levels of persons with disabilities.

Lack of support policies for access to justice

The Justice systems is hardly accessible to persons with disabilities. The CRPD Parallel Report reveals how persons who are deaf are not entitled to access sign language interpretation (Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD), par 111)(Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par. 111) to ensure fair trial. This has led to delayed case rulings and movement of cases to the highest court to get justice. In addition, access to justice by persons with intellectual disabilities and psychosocial disabilities are seriously impaired by the lack of concrete policy to support them. (Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par. 109) This lack of clear policy to provide support in accessing justice is replicated down to community level whereby community authorities are main actors in the community justice system.(Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par. 120) On top of this, the cost to access justice is double-burdens persons with disabilities because support services to enable them to effectively access justice are not ensured. (Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par. 116, 117, 118)

Women

According to the World Report on Disability, women with disabilities face multiple layers of discrimination. The Philippine parallel report (Phil. Coalition on UNCRPD, par. 58-65) also confirms this global report. Women with disabilities are very susceptible to intersectional



discrimination. The lack of awareness regarding the intersecting discrimination that women with disabilities are experiencing perpetuates exclusion in different aspects of socio-economic life. Women with disabilities are discriminated against, not only because of the disability or her gender. Discrimination may also happen because of age, poverty, ethnic background, geographical location, and other social characteristics. There are many women and girls with disabilities who fall victim to abuse, exploitation and other gender-based violence. Many women with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, have not completed primary education. The CRPD Parallel Report also says that more women with disabilities are working in household -related chores as compared to men with disabilities who are spending their time on work and leisure. All these reflect the discriminatory culture and practices against women with disabilities.

More and more, women with disabilities are aware of their rights. An actual case on hand involves a communication filed by 'R' against the Republic of the Philippines, which was upheld by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It has not received a response from the government up to now.

Obstacles in achieving the SDGs

The Philippines volunteered for the 2016 High Political Level Forum (HPLF) for the SDGs. It would not suffice just to present the measly MDG accomplishments. At this crucial stage where Agenda 2030 and SDGs are supposed to take-off, we should not be content with business-as-usual scenarios.

The UNCRPD is a vital instrument in framing the methodologies to achieve the SDGs. Only through this process will it be assured that development would be inclusive and no one would be left behind.

The MDGs could have been a welcome opportunity to change the prevailing inequity and inequality, if not for the fact that persons with disabilities were invisible -- both in the letter of the goals and the accomplishment reports. There was no effective disaggregation of data and little explicit mention of persons with disabilities. Without data disaggregation, one cannot tell whether progress and achievements in the MDGs have had positive impacts on the sectors usually at the tail-end of progress.

The SDGs, likewise, will never be achieved if the hard-to-reach groups of people are not consciously targeted by development policies. Data disaggregation is very important to address inequalities across different development goals. It is important that sensitive indicators to measure efforts undertaken by the State to ensure inclusion and no one being left behind are carefully chosen.

Full and effective participation of persons with disabilities and their organizations must be included in all aspects of planning, implementation, financing, and monitoring and evaluation.

To achieve inclusion of persons with disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities need to be implemented by the State to ensure that all persons with disabilities enjoy and exercise all their human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, apart from the gaps in policy support, the lack of adequate budget allocations to fulfill the obligations of the State in the different international laws and conventions it signed up to, will likewise render these signed-on commitments as mere "paper promises".

Recommendations

For SDG Goals 1 to 5:

1. Introduce measures and policies to ensure that persons with disabilities, including women, (CRPD, Art. 6) children, (CRPD, Art. 7) youth, older persons and indigenous persons with disabilities, are protected from poverty and benefit equally from mainstream poverty alleviation and wealth-creation programs. These should contribute to the implementation of disability-inclusive social protection systems and measures in line with the CRPD.
2. Eliminate laws, policies and practices such as institutionalization, forced treatment and denial of legal capacity that segregate persons with disabilities (as well as those from under-represented groups from society) and those that reinforce such persons' personal and economic dependency on others
3. Make all levels of existing health care and social protection systems inclusive, and public health care policies, programs, facilities and information accessible by persons with disabilities, and based entirely on the free and informed consent of the person concerned, including provision of disability-related extra costs, financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services and access to safe, effective and affordable medicine, assistive products and vaccines.
4. Introduce measures, through devising longer-term inclusive education plans (Human Rights Watch, 2015, p. 72) at national, regional and local levels, to ensure that all children with disabilities, including intellectual, psychosocial and developmental disabilities, are included within the mainstream educational system in line with CRPD provisions. Such measures must also ensure complete free, local, equitable, accessible primary and secondary education of quality; ensure access to quality early childhood development, including pre-primary education, promoting and using accessible communication methods, including assistive technologies and inter alia sign languages; (CRPD, Art. 2, 9, 21) and equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational, business and tertiary education, including university.
5. To facilitate the above recommendations, it is necessary to recruit teachers, instructors and trainers with disabilities, and train all teachers in inclusive practices, including those relating to language and communication, through teacher education programs that focus on the pedagogy of education and inclusion. This requires training on the understanding and application of inclusive practices, and reasonable accommodations and individual support that facilitate access to knowledge, (UNICEF, 2013, p. 28) in line with the CRPD.

For SDG Goals 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11:

1. Ensure equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation facilities for persons with disabilities; in line with CRPD Article 28, e.g. accessible latrines, bathing facilities and water points.
2. Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and efficient energy services for persons with disabilities, including the use of alternative energy facilities where warranted by the local situation, limiting in particular the frequency of power cuts; in line with CRPD Article 28, e.g. access to electricity, preferably affordable alternative green sources of energy.

3. Remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities through mechanisms including non-coercive legislation and regulation, tailored interventions, internships and apprenticeships, vocational rehabilitation and training, self-employment and microfinance schemes, social protection, and working to change discriminatory attitudes, especially in rural areas.
4. Guarantee access to formal credit sources such as bank loans and micro-finance for start-up businesses, whose interest rates take into account the additional costs related to disabilities, helping them to avoid additional credit costs from informal sources.
5. Promote universal design and remove barriers to public accommodation, transport, information, and communication to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in education, employment and social life; in line with CRPD Articles 9, 11, 19, 21 (e), 24, 27, 28 and 30, e.g. access to ICTs, in order to enable communication, promotion of sign languages and forms other than traditional written and verbal communication.
6. All such investment and infrastructure development should be guided by the principle of ecologically sustainable and universal design.

For SDG Goal 13

1. Climate resilience programs and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies and policies should make disability a core, cross-cutting theme and must be included in the implementation of the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 so that they are both implemented in line with CRPD Articles 11, 21 and 25.
2. Particular focus must be on the leadership, knowledge and suggestions of persons with disabilities living in disaster-prone areas, in low-elevation coastal areas or small islands to make sure that goals, indicators and development policies are fully inclusive of persons with disabilities in all phases of DRR.
3. The immediate post-emergency phase and early reconstruction period should be driven by the “build back better” principles, stressing the opportunity to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities through accessible and inclusive investment and decision-making processes.
4. The observations and recommendations of OHCHR in relation to Article 11 of the CRPD should be noted and implemented. (OHCHR, 2016) In particular, temporary shelters and other constructions must be fully accessible, information and communications, health and education provision must be accessible to persons with disabilities, in particular children with disabilities.

For SDG Goals 10, 16 and 17

1. There is a need for national and administrative data collection, capacity building and disaggregation of data by disability. In addition, we are calling on the government to recognize and integrate the Washington Group module’s (National Center for Health Statistics) short set of questions into the national censuses, labor force surveys and other household surveys. This will require all persons with disabilities to be registered at birth; all persons with disabilities to be included in and have access to public services, all persons with disabilities to be represented in key decision-making bodies and processes.
2. Governments should ensure the provision of equality training to civil servants, teachers and health and social workers at all levels and in all sectors, in an effort to reduce

disability-based discrimination. Governments should also establish accountability mechanisms and sanctions for failure to act against discrimination and exclusion.

3. As an urgent priority, there must be a major reduction of instances of persons with disabilities being subjected to violence and abuse, in particular women and girls with disabilities.
4. Empower justice, law and order institutions to apply the normative standards of the CRPD so as to end impunity for rights violations. Legal systems must be accessible so persons with disabilities can actively promote and defend their rights and actively participate in justice processes.
5. Amend all legislation and policies that are discriminatory to persons with disabilities, including the denial of Reasonable Accommodation in all programs, services and activities.

End Note

¹ LHabilitation is assisting a person achieve developmental skills when impairments have caused delaying or blocking of initial acquisition of skills, in order that she or he can have maximum independence in performing daily activities and enhancing the quality of life.

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The Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to Transform our World

- Goal 1.** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4.** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5.** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6.** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7.** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8.** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10.** Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12.** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13.** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14.** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- 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
- 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
- Goal 17.** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

** Lifted from the actual United Nations resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 titled Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, page 14.*

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