

Labour Market Profile The Philippines – 2023/2024



This profile provides a comprehensive overview of the labour market's structure, development, and challenges.

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DANISH TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

PREFACE

The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) is a development organisation, and it has joined forces with the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO Norway), a national umbrella trade union organisation, to draw up this Philippines Labour Market Profile (LMP) to support the development of just and democratic societies with focus on the pillars in the global Decent Work Agenda (DWA).

The profile is used to generate knowledge about the country and design programme activities implemented in partner relationships with trade union organisations. The objective of activities is to assist the partner organisations in becoming change agents in their own national and regional labour market context to achieve tangible improvements in the national DWA conditions and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The LMP format provides a comprehensive overview of the labour market's structure, development, and challenges. Apart from the DWA and SDG framework, the LMP also follows several other central factors addressing labour market development aspects such as Just Transition, the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the unionism evolution, social dialogue and bi-/tri-partite mechanisms, policy development, and the status of legal reforms in the context of ILO conventions and labour standards.

Primary sources of data and information for LMPs are:

As part of programme implementation and monitoring, national partner organisations provide annual narrative progress reports, including information on labour market developments. Specific data and information relating to central indicators are collected using a unique data collection tool.

National statistical institutions and international databanks are used as a source of general (statistical) data and information, such as ILOSTAT and NATLEX, World Bank Open Data, ITUC Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, the U.S. Department of State, and other internationally recognised labour-related global indexes.

Academia and media sources are used in research on labour market issues.

The profile is regularly updated, and the current version covers 2023 to 2024. Labour Market Profiles for more than 20 countries are available on the DTDA's website:

<https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/>.

LO Norway and the DTDA prepared this Labour Market Profile in close collaboration with partners from the Philippines. If you have any queries or comments on the profile, please contact Mr Kasper Andersen (kan@dtda.dk) from the DTDA.

The front-page photo is from ACIW, a school for plumbers in the Philippines.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Philippine economy nose-dived in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, but it has swiftly rebounded since 2021. Structural shifts in employment are supported by solid long-term economic growth, leading to poverty reduction. In recent years, real minimum wage hike failed, labour income share decreased, and progress in labour productivity stalled.

Although a broad policy agenda supports the labour market framework, it is stuck among the ten worst countries in ranking for workers on the Global Rights Index. The Philippines is even among the most vulnerable countries to climate change, shifting the migration landscape that puts an escalating weight on the Just Transition agenda. The functioning free trade agreements have weak or no labour provisions.

Social dialogue functions at the policy level and for consultative bodies, while the application of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) stands very low, indicating that it remains a very underdeveloped factor at the enterprise level. The Covid-19 pandemic challenged the labour dispute settlement system's preventive mediation and has not yet grasped its 2019 level; the government is boosting the number of labour inspectors to improve the system.

The trade union membership rate is rising but not catching the employment growth, leading to falling trade union density, especially in the public sector, suffering the controversial contractualization. Generally, modernisation processes of unionism have been defied by applying such controversial employment contracts, union-busting, union avoidance by employers, and overall lack of awareness.

Despite an improvement with accelerated formal job creation and changes in the structure and quality of employment, it has not accompanied employment growth on a massive scale. For instance, manufacturing employment is stuck at flat growth. Instead, there is a high awareness of the

Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and the country is one of the top outsourcing destinations as it offers expertise in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. However, as many as half of jobs in the Philippines are at high risk of being substituted by technology development, including Artificial Intelligence.

Youth unemployment is remarkably low in the Philippines, but it is overshadowed by massive labour out-migration and the lowest youth workforce participation rate in the ASEAN countries. The official low unemployment rate of 3% is underestimated due to 'disguised unemployment' among subsistence farmers, and close to half of the working-age population is economically inactive. Child labour is present and highly linked to armed conflicts and poverty in rural areas. Labour gender inequalities are apparent in the significant gender wage gap, but firms with women's participation in ownership are remarkably high. Despite youth scores poorly on the Global Youth Development Index, the NEET rate (those not in employment, education, or training) fell from 25% in 2010 to 18% in 2021, curbing the gender gap.

A time of massification of higher education has led to a mismatch between graduate learning and industry requirements. Student numbers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are rising, and community-based TVET has grown faster than other modalities. Firms offering formal training programmes rose during the 2010s, hovering above other ASEAN countries.

More Filipino workers get access to health services, but a worrisome substantial drop is detected in the coverage of older persons receiving a pension, mirrored in one of the world's weakest pension systems. Even if social safety-net programmes reach the poorest groups, they demonstrate meagre results. Due to controversial labour contractual conditions and informality, low penetration rates and leakage issues haunt social insurance programmes.

Status of key labour market indicators in the framework of the Decent Work Agenda (DWA) in the Philippines

Creating decent jobs	
Policy reforms addressing creation of decent employment.	The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2023–2028 (MTPDP) serves as the overall planning document containing a wide range of policy reforms addressing decent employment. Social partners were consulted in the making of the MTPDP.
ILO standard setting on improvement of status of workers from the informal economy.	National forums dealing with informal economy workers and specific policies addressing the status of informal economy workers took place in 2022. Foremost amongst specific union policy recommendations is the "15-Point Labour Agenda" rolled out by the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU). Also, there was the Women Workers' United, a forum tackling informal economy workers, and aiming to include this issue as a part of "Women Workers' Agenda." A series of bills were consolidated aiming to protect informal workers who were severely affected by quarantine measures during the Covid-19 pandemic. Also, the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy and the Freelance Workers' Protection Act passed the committee stage but have not yet been enacted into law.
Guaranteeing rights at work	
Growth in trade union membership.	The membership rate increased by 5.1% from 2020 to 2023.
Violations of trade union rights.	Ranking 5 of 5+ (5+ is worst) in 2022: Classified as "No guarantee of rights" *
Recent new labour laws/decrees	Labour Education Act of 2021. Amended to the Public Service Act in 2023 allow sectors like railways, airports, expressways, and telecommunications open to 100% foreign ownership.
Partner organisations with minimum 30% women representation in decision-making bodies.	Estimations suggest below 30%.
Extending social protection	
Percentage of total population covered by Health Social Protection.	Around 70% of households were members of PhilHealth in 2022, without regard to the type of coverage. The trade union movement lobbied and campaigned for the increase in Health Social Protection coverage, which paved the way for passing the 2013 Universal Health Care Act. All Senior Citizens upon reaching the age of 60 years are automatically covered in the Universal Health Care Programme. Workers not directly employed or are self-employed and free-lancers are open to join the PhilHealth as self-paying members.
Workers from the informal economy have access to national social security schemes.	Informal economy workers (especially the self-employed) have access to the social security system as self-paying members through plenty of available private social security schemes and mutual aid associations and cooperatives. The income of most informal economy workers is not enough to pay for the premiums of social safety net providers. Estimates suggest that this segment's coverage at around six to seven million contributors.
Promoting social dialogue	
Trade union density to employment.	4.9% in 2023 1 st quarter 2023.
Cooperation in labour-employer relations.	Ranking 15 out of 141 countries (one is best). **
Number of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs).	From 972 in 2022 to 1,094 in 1 st quarter 2023. ***
Workers' coverage of Collective Bargaining Agreements to employees.	0.9% in 1 st quarter 2023.
Bi-/tri- partite agreements concluded in recent years.	In 2022, the NTIPC has passed 12 resolutions covering the administration and enforcement of labour standards. In 2023, the tripartite agreement of the Freedom of Association Roadmap is in the pipeline. Bipartite agreements are concluded mostly through the Leaders' Forum that has for its members employers' group (ECOP, PCCI, PhilExport) and workers group (FFW, TUCP, and SENTRO). Its most recent agreement is the endorsement of the recommendation to the ILO High Level Tripartite Mission in January 2023 for the creation of the Philippine Commission on Freedom of Association.
* Countries with the rating of 5 are the worst countries in the world to work in. While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices. ** Based on survey data for employers' view.	
Sources: The Philippines Department of Labour and Employment; International Trade Union Confederation, Global Rights Index, 2022; The Global Competitiveness Report, 2019, 8 th pillar: Labour market efficiency; DTDA, The Philippines: Data-collection tool; own calculations on trade union membership growth, trade union density, and workers' coverage of CBAs to employees.	

COUNTRY MAP



Source: The Nations Online Project.

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ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

The Philippines is a dynamic economy, linked by a vibrant labour market, solid consumer demand and robust personnel remittances. Soon, the country will move from a lower-middle-income country to an upper-middle-income country.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the son of Marcos Sr., was elected president in May 2022 with the largest popular vote in a presidential election since his father's ouster.

The new Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2023–2028 was elaborated by social dialogue. The plan sets ambitious goals focusing on the following:

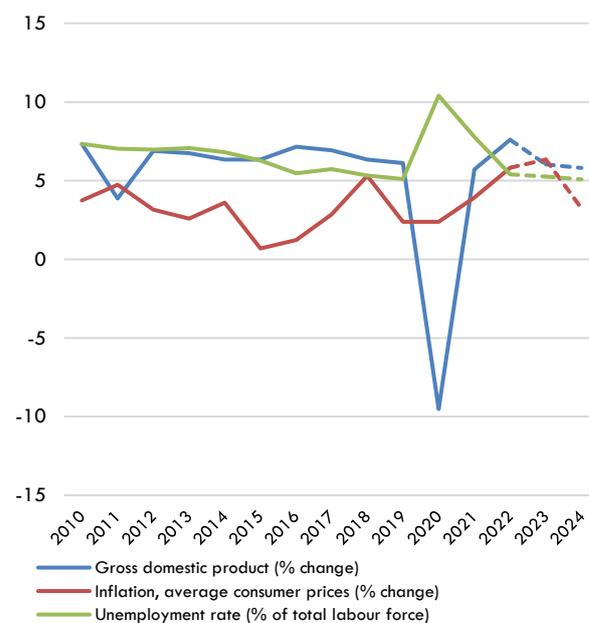
- Maintain an annual economic growth rate between 6.0 to 7.0% in 2023 and 6.5 to 8.0% from 2024 to 2028.
- Create more, better, and more resilient jobs.
- Keep food and overall prices low and stable.
- Enforce fiscal discipline.
- Transform the production sectors through innovation.
- All efforts are intended to improve the welfare of Filipinos significantly.

The steady high economic growth in the 2010s suddenly dived deeply in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic: growth fell by seventeen percentage points, reaching -9.5%. This rupture cost US\$15 billion, and unemployment temporarily skyrocketed. This situation led to drops in consumption, investments, and national savings, exacerbated by the sharp slowdown in exports and tourism. The policy framework supported the economy's resilience, fuelled by government expenditure and debt hikes. Growth rapidly rebounded in 2021 and is projected to stay in line with the MTPDP's threshold in the upcoming years (see more in Figure 1 and Appendix Table 18).

Inflation in consumer prices is projected to peak above 5% in 2022 and 2023, beyond the MTPDP threshold of within 2.5% to 4.5%. This relatively high inflation has put pressure on public finances, mainly through subsidy spending. Workers' income

purchasing power has deteriorated in recent years, echoed in negative real minimum wage growth. Projections suggest that inflation will fall by 2.0% to 4.0% from 2024 to 2028 (see more in Figure 1 and the Working Conditions section).

Figure 1: Projections of Gross Domestic Product, inflation, and unemployment in the Philippines, 2010-2024

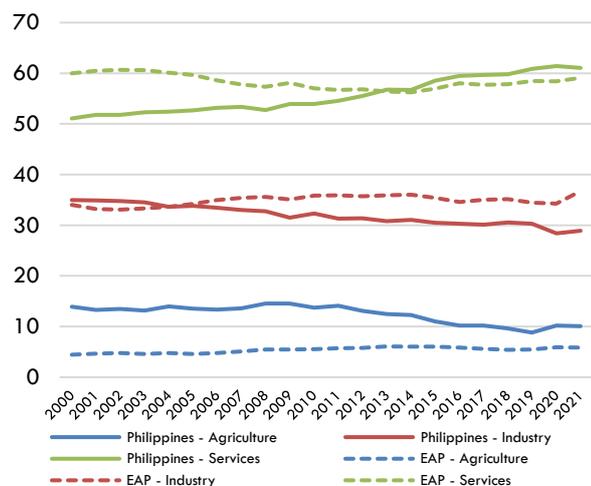


Sources: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2023.

The Philippines' economic development has demonstrated diversification as a frontrunner for semiconductor, shipbuilding, and electronics exporter, not to mention dependency on remittances. The private sector is buoyant, with a strong performance from the services sector, including business process outsourcing.

Figure 2 below shows that the Philippine service sector has steadily increased its value-added and it superseded the regional average in the mid-2010s. In contrast, the country's industry sector's value-added has lost its pace over the last two decades. The agricultural sector's value-added also slowly fell during the last two decades, except for a slight upturn at the beginning of the 2020s due to the Covid-19 pandemic. These economic developments are reflected in shifts in the employment structure (see more in the Workforce section).

Figure 2: Aggregate sectoral economic changes, value added, % of GDP, 2000-2020



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.

The informal economy is widespread, haunted by corruption, and it is a significant obstacle to good governance (see more in the Informal Economy sub-section). Business regulations remain cumbersome: The Doing Business Index ranked the Philippines 95 out of 190 countries (1st is best) in 2020 (see more details in Appendix Table 16).

The high economic growth, structural employment shifts, and social protection transfer scheme coverage have trickled down into poverty reduction. The poverty rate dropped from 33% in 2000 to 17% in 2018, remaining the highest rate among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in line with Laos. The rate even experienced a minor upsurge reaching 18% in 2021. It was due to shocks endured through the Covid-19 pandemic, the hollowing out of workers' income purchasing power, and weather-related shocks with negative impacts on business.

Philippines Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) are among the lowest among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) peers, mainly due to the legal limit of foreign investment and foreign ownership restrictions in several sectors. The amended Public Service Act of 2023 allows sectors like railways, airports, expressways, and telecommunications open to 100% foreign ownership, which is expected to bring the country's FDI and job creation on a rise.

Just Transition

The Philippines is in the Tropical Cyclone belt and the Pacific Ring of Fire, placing it among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Climate-related and geological hazards are reflected in around 20 tropical cyclones every year and frequent occurrences of seismic shocks. National authorities argue that the impacts of climate change are immense, including annual losses in GDP, changes in rainfall patterns and distribution, droughts, threats to biodiversity and food security, sea level rise, public health risks, and endangerment of vulnerable groups such as women and indigenous people (see also the Migration sub-section).¹ Studies projected losses of Philippines labour productivity depending on the global temperature change levels, reaching about 1% in 2025 and up to 4.4% of annual daylight work hours lost in 2085.²

Changes Filipino workers' daily lives in the increasing temperatures resonance throughout, from dwindling fisheries resources, which are exacerbated by illegal fishing activities from other countries, to deteriorating working conditions. For instance, sectors that require workers to stay outside – such as agriculture, construction, and some public services. The link between climate change and other sectors is even more complex: for example, the so-called “carbon bubble”, a shift from carbon use, can pose financial risks in trying to implement the transition without destabilising economies. If financial systems are affected, other employment forms could also be affected.

The tripartite nature of the social dialogue has provided platforms for bringing in the current broad legal and policy framework to tackle the alarming climate challenges. This led to the National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change and the Sustainable Finance Roadmap, the Climate Change Act of 2009, and the Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016, linking with MTPDP. This Green Jobs Act seeks to promote work that produces goods and services interlinked to preserve the environment. It brought fiscal incentives, such as duty-free import of capital equipment and other tax perks, to encourage individuals and enterprises to participate in the creation of green jobs and

technology. Policymakers are currently pushing for a law banning single-use plastics.

The National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028 established the seven thematic areas of government action to address climate change: food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and knowledge and capacity development. Some of the changes in progress are characterised by jeepney public transport trucks under modernisation to reduce their carbon emission. It has brought unmanageable costs that could upend the livelihood of about 61,000 traditional jeepney drivers, as they face a looming deadline to modernise their fleets due to weak subsidy of the total cost of the modern jeepney.³

The Green Jobs Act of 2016 promotes the creation of “green jobs” and employment that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment. It is particularly in the agriculture sector where many workers shift out of agriculture, which could negatively affect the food security as well as economic productivity. For instance, the agriculture and forestry industry lost at least 500,000 workers in 2022 due to climate changes, population growth, as well as diminishing farm size and declining incomes.⁴ The law also mandates the Department of Labour and Employment (DoLE) to coordinate with other government agencies to formulate a National Green Jobs Human Resource Development Plan on expanding, enhancing, and utilising the workforce, both in the private and public sectors.

In 2016, the Philippines was selected as a pilot country for applying the International Labour Organization (ILO) policy guidelines on Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies. The pilot-country project aimed to enable the Philippine social partners – government, workers, and employers’ organizations – to leverage the process of structural change towards a sustainable, low-carbon, climate-resilient economy to create decent jobs on a significant scale and in a sustained and inclusive manner.

The Philippines signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2016 and is committed to its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Ambitiously, it aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors by increasing the national carbon intensity reduction target to 75% in 2030, of which 2.7% is unconditional and 72% is conditional, which is focused on the agriculture, waste, industry, transport, and energy sectors.⁵ A landmark project will accelerate the transition from coal to clean energy, and there has been a moratorium on new coal plants since 2020. However, the impact of this transition is in limbo.

Special Economic Zones

The Special Economic Zone Act of 1995 replaced the then purely export-oriented zones with a more comprehensive zone model that evolved with the proliferation of SEZs and special economic and free port zones. It further created the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), a regulatory body that monitors and administers these economic zones. SEZ companies receive several exclusive benefits; for example, income tax holidays, tax-free and duty-free import of capital equipment, spare parts and supplies, and zero value-added tax.⁶

SEZs have been transformed over the past decades and linked with a new industrial policy and a long-term plan known as *AmBisyon Natin 2040*. SEZs have changed from being government-controlled export processing zones (EPZs) to more liberal economic zones, including private participation and a broad spectrum of economic activities. The Philippines’ government is attempting to gear up to compete with other ASEAN manufacturing hotspots to grab a share of foreign investment. Benefits within SEZs have attracted the FDI inflow; PEZA approved around 60% of the total FDI in the Philippines during the 2010s.

In 2022, there were 421 registered SEZs, and of these 300 are IT parks and centres, 78 are manufacturing ecozones, 23 are agro-industrial ecozones, 17 are tourism ecozones, and three are medical tourism ecozones.⁷ Investments in these export zones (EZs) peaked in the middle of the

2010s but started to fall, and in 2020 reached the 2006-level. Employment in EZs steadily increased from around 92,000 in 1994 to peak at 1.6 million workers in 2019. A result of the Covid-19 pandemic shock in 2020 reflected that employment in SEZs fell by at least 2.3% in 2020.⁸ SEZs' employment share of all employees increased from 3.7% in 2010 to 5.7% in 2019 but fell to 5.4% in 2020.

A recent study listed 20 registered unions or unions being organized in two ecozones (Cavite and Mactan). Only five have concluded CBAs (all from Cavite); no union with a CBA presently exists in Mactan. While most factories being organised are in the garments industry, none of these have reached maturity as sole and exclusive bargaining agents with a CBA.⁹

Unions claim that officials who governed the SEZs explicitly attempted to frustrate union organising efforts by maintaining union-free or strike-free policies enforced by the Joint Industrial Peace and Concerns Office (JIPCO) initiated in 2018 by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and PEZA. They argued that the local government stationed security forces near industrial areas or SEZs to intimidate workers trying to organise and alleged that companies in the zones used frivolous lawsuits to harass union leaders. Also, local zone directors asserted exclusive authority to conduct their own inspections as part of the zones' privileges intended by the legislature, not to mention employers control hiring processes through special zone labour centres haunted by the threat of red-tagging of union organisers. For these reasons – and partly due to trade union organisers' restricted access to the closely guarded zones and the propensity among zone establishments to adopt fixed-term, casual, temporary, or seasonal employment contracts – unions had little success at organising in the SEZs.¹⁰ In 2021, the NAGKAISA statement manifesting strong opposition to the creation of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the PEZA joint Alliance for Industrial Peace and Programme Office (AIPPO), which was seen to restrict further trade union organising in the country's Ecozones. The creation of the AIPPO was considered a response

to the already strong objections of workers to JIPCO.

The dispute resolution mechanisms of the Department of Labour and Employment (DoLE) were unable to effectively stop employers from their interference in EPZ workers exercising their right to join or form a union and to concerted action against employer abuse.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

The Philippines' legal framework includes the principle of social justice and protecting workers. A series of measures have been filed with the Senate and the House of Representatives over the years, but often the government has stalled final approval for amendments. Few new laws have been registered in recent years (see more details in Appendix Table 13). A new Public Services Labour Relations Bill has been accepted at the committee level of the Philippine Congress' lower house. However, it faces strong reservations from the Civil Service Commission, and it is still not approved.

The Philippines operates with broad coverage at labour-related policy level, including special focus on women and youth. This is linked with the previously mentioned Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan set-up.

The status of central labour-related laws is summarised below.

Constitution

The Philippines' 1987 Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of association, but it is strictly regulated. The constitution ensures that workers are protected, as well as aims to promote the shared responsibility of workers and employers in settling disputes. Women workers' maternal function and full employment are also a part of the constitution. A revision to the 1987 Constitution is in progress. There are debates on replacing the current unitary state system with a federal one, relaxing foreign participation in utilities and critical services and introducing articles constraining political dynasties. In February 2023, the House constitutional

amendments committee approved a resolution calling for a constitutional convention to amend or revise the 1987 Constitution.

Labour Code

The Labour Code of 1974 governs the Philippines' employment practices and labour relations. The law primarily governs six areas:

- Pre-employment, including the recruitment and placement of overseas workers and the employment of non-resident foreign nationals.
- Human resources development, including training for apprentices and learners.
- Labour standards, including work hours, rest periods, wages, and premium pay.
- Health and safety, and social welfare benefits.
- Labour relations, including regulations on the organisation and activities of unions, collective bargaining, and strikes and lockouts.
- Post-employment, including termination of contracts and retirement.¹¹

The law prohibits anti-union discrimination and recognises the right to collective bargaining. It allows all workers to form and join independent unions, except in the military, police, and short-term employees (see more in the Observations on Labour Legislation sub-section).

The right to strike is also acknowledged but strictly regulated; for instance, strikes organised by trade unions are allowed if most members approve them, along with an approved period of notice.

Social protection legislation

The National Health Insurance Act of 1995, the Social Security Law of 1997, and the Home Development Mutual Fund Law of 2009 outline certain social security obligations for Philippine employers and their employees.

In terms of extending social protection to workers in the informal economy, the National Health Insurance Act of 2013 (RA 10606) mandates the enrolment of workers to access health benefits, and this is financially linked with PhilHealth.

PhilHealth coverage only included members based on premium payments until the Republic Act No. 11223 of 2019, also known as the Universal Health Care Act. This new act mandates the institutionalisation of health technology assessment (HTA) as a fair and transparent priority-setting mechanism.

Domestic Workers Act

The Domestic Workers Act of 2013 has institutionalised several policies concerning protecting and improving working conditions for Filipino workers. The act has approved rights and benefits, including daily and weekly rest, 13th month pay, coverage under social security schemes, regional minimum monthly wages, and employee certificates. Regarding the registration of domestic workers, the employer must register the domestic worker, and deduct then remit the required Social Security System (SSS) premiums and contributions.

Observations on labour legislation

Workers face several challenges in exercising their rights in the Philippines. According to the employers' view, labour regulation is rigid, primarily because of strict dismissal procedures and high minimum wage.¹² On the workers' side, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) registered a wide range of observations concerning the international standards of the right to organise, the right to collective bargaining, and the right to strike (see more in Appendix Table 22).¹³

Republic Act 11479 of 2020 (or the Anti-Terrorism Act) is controversial. It gravely undermines civil liberties and endangers rights at work by placing workers and trade union activists under pressure from the police, the military and other security forces, exposing them to arbitrary arrest, indiscriminate and baseless attacks, harassment, intimidation, and killings.

The Supreme Court called for temporary employees in government service to have a right to self-organisation and be covered by the protection against arbitrary dismissals. However, no domestic

law, rule, or policy about the right to organise temporary employees exists.

Apart from these legal restrictions, the coverage of labour-related laws is haunted by the widespread informal economy. This leads employers and workers to use loopholes in business and labour regulations, often due to a lack of awareness or incentives.

Ratified ILO Conventions

International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions enumerate international principles and rights at work. The Philippines has ratified 38 conventions, of which 31 are in force, 4 have been denounced; 1 instrument has been abrogated.

Appendix Table 14 shows that nine out of ten Fundamental Conventions and two out of four Governance Conventions have been ratified, and 17 of 176 Technical Conventions are up-to-date and actively promoted. The latest ratified conventions are the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C187) of 2019 and the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention (C151) of 2017. The trade union movement has conducted a campaign for the Philippine government to ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention (C190), but it remains pending.

The ILO's independent supervisory system body, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), has many observations and direct requests for conventions. For instance, in 2022, the CEACR conducted observations of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C087) dealing with continued and serious violations of workers' civil liberties and freedom of association rights, as well as a tripartite roadmap to implement the 2019 Conference Committee conclusions and achieve full compliance with the Convention.¹⁴

The CEACR also listed observations of the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention

(C098) regarding a previous request to the government to provide information on the allegations of union busting practices, blacklisting and anti-union dismissals and suspensions in three companies. The CEACR further focussed on compliance with for specific categories of workers covered by collective bargaining; content of collective bargaining in the public sector; requirements for negotiation and adoption of collective bargaining agreements in the electricity sector, and collective bargaining in practice.¹⁵

Sustainable Development Goals indicator 8.8.2 measures compliance with fundamental labour rights. Based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, the Philippines improved from a peak of 4.97 in 2016 to 3.97 in 2020 (0 out of 10; 0 is best), landing better than the ASEAN average (see details in Table 1). Although the government made some efforts to enforce laws to protect workers' rights, the position remains at a high level, not to mention among the worst ranking on the Global Rights Index (see more in the Trade Union Rights Violations section).

Table 1: Level of national compliance with labour rights among the Philippines and neighbouring countries, 2020

Country	Value
ASEAN	4.51
Cambodia	4.54
Indonesia	1.70
Philippines	3.97

Note: The value ranges from 0 to 10, with 0 being the best possible score (indicating higher levels of compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining (FACB) rights) and 10 the worst (indicating lower levels of compliance with FACB rights based on ILO textual sources and national legislation).

Sources: International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

Trade Agreements

The Philippines has signed eight free trade agreements (FTAs). Six FTAs are via the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), representing ten member countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – so far, signed with Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand. Two bilateral FTAs are

the Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (PJEP), initiated in 2008, and the EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland – launched in 2018. Except for the two bilateral FTAs and the ASEAN-New Zealand FTA, which included a memorandum of agreement on labour cooperation, the other FTAs do not have labour provisions. It is worth mentioning that the two bilateral FTAs do not include enforcement and monitoring mechanisms.¹⁶

Other broader trade agreements with the European Union's GSP+ have been more marginal, with no labour provisions.

SOCIAL PARTNERS

Social partners are central to promoting the realisation of core labour rights and social justice for workers by protecting freedom of association and collective bargaining in bi- and tripartite functions. These partners usually represent government institutions, trade unions, and employers' organisations.

Government

Labour enforcement is governed by the Labour Law Compliance System (LLCS). It combines developmental and regulatory approaches in promoting a culture of compliance with labour and occupational safety and health (OSH) standards. It encourages strategic partnerships with employers and workers to undertake joint assessments in establishments.

The Department of Labour and Employment (DoLE) is the regulatory entity. It administers and enforces the Labour Code and is empowered to issue rules and regulations on employment matters. The DoLE has the authority to enforce laws on freedom of association and collective bargaining. The institution publishes annual Labour Relations Overview reports following statistical trends concerning unions, collective bargaining, the Labour Management Council, industrial action, the single-entry approach programme, and social dialogue. It is further a part of central agencies such as the Employee's

Compensation Commission, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the National Conciliation and Mediation Board, the Institute for Labour Studies, the National Labour Relations Commission, the Occupational Safety and Health Centre, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the Professional Regulation Commission, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the National Maritime Polytechnic.

The DoLE is further responsible for coordinating the investigation, prosecution and resolution of cases alleging violence and harassment of labour leaders and trade union activists, currently pending before the ILO.

The agencies involved in the implementation of the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) are the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the DoLE, and the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC).

Central players in the social protection sector are the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), the Social Security System (SSS), and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

Trade unions

Workers' organisations in the Philippines are part of the tripartite structure in promoting labour standards in the country. Their role in advocating workers' rights and ratifying and enforcing international labour conventions has been crucial throughout the years.

Unionism sticks to a "state-centric" labour relations system focusing on policies and principles of labour protectionism. The system has been challenged by the modernisation process, particularly in terms of responding to a more globalised, liberalised, technology-driven, and market-oriented economic system.¹⁷

Organised workers in the Philippines can be divided into i) the public sector, ii) the private sector, including enterprise-based unions, and iii) workers'

associations (informal sector). Table 2 shows the status of registered labour organisations in 2023, representing 129,850, with a total membership of almost 5.3 million workers at the beginning of 2023. The groups represent a membership share of 11%, 31%, and 58%, respectively (see more in Appendix Table 15). Leading trade union federations membership rates were represented by the FFW members of 65,000, the TUCP of 475,000, the KMU of 115,000, and the SENTRO of 100,000 (see also Appendix Table 19).¹⁸

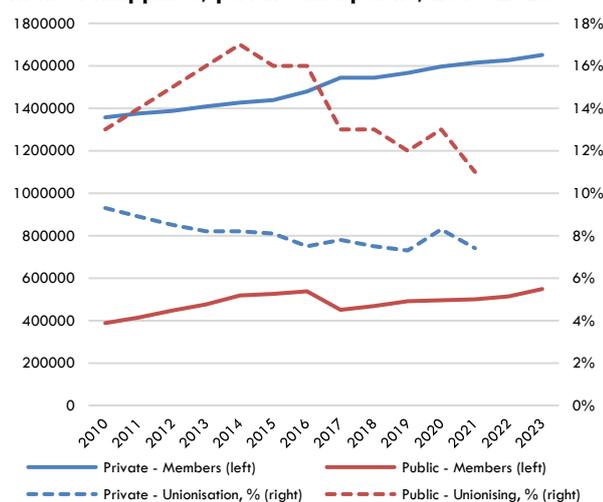
Table 2: Status of organised workers in the Philippines, 2023

Indicator	Value
Public sector organisations	1,939
Number of members	548,591
Private sector organisations	18,504
Number of members	1,650,912
Workers' Associations organisations *	109,407
Number of members	3,050,539

* Workers associations (informal sector) refer to an association of workers organised for the mutual aid and protection of its members or for any legitimate purpose other than collective bargaining.

Source: Philippines' Bureau of Labour Relations, Statistical Report (1st quarter).

Figure 3: Trade union members and unionisation rate in the Philippines, private and public, 2010-2023



Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, Statistical Reports.

Figure 3 above also pictures membership of formal trade unions (excluding workers' associations) rose in both the private and public sectors until it plummeted in 2017. A renewed vibrancy in

organising workers in the public sector rebounded membership numbers in 2018, especially in local government units attempting to end the controversial non-standard or end-of-contract ("endo") model, and in 2023 membership finally superseded the previous peak in 2016. Overall, the upsurge in the trade union membership rates is not in pace with growth in employee numbers, signalling a declining unionisation rate.

The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 did not bring a drop in the aggregate formal trade union membership rate. Instead, more workers not organised got hit hard by massive layoffs, with thousands in 'floating status' in employment and others under the "endo" arrangement.

The trade union movement in the Philippines has been fragmented, mostly due to personality differences of leaders as well as differences in ideological thinking. It is gradually becoming more organised, though. The latest conglomeration of trade unions, born out of a united trade union representation to the ILO High Level Tripartite Mission in January 2023, is the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU) composed of the NAGKAISA ("united") labour coalition counting 49 trade unions and the KMU (see also Appendix Table 21). This group correspond to of approximately 923,000 workers or 42% of the 2.2 million organised labour in the country.¹⁹ The NAGKAISA operates with a loose organisational structure. It involves themes, such as ensuring workers' security of tenure by eliminating the controversial contractualization scheme to deter the closing of union organisations, minimum wage taxation, the institutionalisation of core labour standards in the agro-industrial plan, and others. Other formations exist but data are scarce.

Other factors negatively affect unionisation. First, applying "endo" makes it complicated to organise workers. Legal reforms to stop this model have been a hot topic (see more in the Working Conditions section). Second, unionism's legal framework promotes a highly competitive process of certification elections (i.e., a method of determining through secret ballot the sole and exclusive

bargaining agent of all the employees in an appropriate bargaining unit for collective bargaining). Third, union-busting and union avoidance by employers is common, mainly from mistrust between the parties.

Trade unions often operate with gender and youth policies.²⁰ Other unionism facts, outlined by the latest national 2019/2020 Integrated Survey on Labour and Employment, are summarised below:

- 99% of all unions have Collective Bargaining Agreements.
- 99% of unionised establishments had unions with rank-and-file employees as bargaining units.
- Union density rate was registered at 6.0%.
- Female workers comprised 45% of the total unionised workers.
- Two out of seven union officers and union presidents were female.
- About 7.1% of establishments had established Labour-Management Cooperation bodies.

Employers' Organisations

Estimates suggest that about 2.3% of the total employment in the Philippines represented employers in March 2023, which is slightly lower than South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific average at approximately 2.8%.²¹

The Global Competitiveness Index provides the Philippines employers' view on a wide range of aspects, including labour market efficiency. The country ranks 39th out of 141 countries (1st is the best) in the mentioned pillar (see more details in Table 3).

Table 3: Labour market efficiency in the Philippines, 2019

Indicator	Rank
Total	39
Redundancy costs (weeks of salary) **	116
Hiring and firing practices *	54
Cooperation in labour-employer relations *	15
Flexibility of wage determination *	51

Active labour market policies *	50
Workers' rights *	104
Ease of hiring foreign labour *	76
Internal labour mobility *	7
Reliance on professional management *	28
Pay and productivity *	13
Ratio of wage and salaried female workers to male workers **	87
Labour tax rate **	26

* Survey data. ** Ranked by per cent. Note: Rank from 1 to 141 (1 is highest).

Source: The Global Competitiveness Report, 2019, 8th pillar: Labour market efficiency.

Based on the list of 35 risks identified by the Executive Opinion Survey and listed in the Global Risks Report 2023, the five risks most likely to pose the biggest threat to the Philippines in the next two years are natural disasters and extreme weather events, debt crises, rapid and/or sustained inflation, and misinformation.²²

The Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is officially known as the umbrella organisation for the Philippines business community and recognised as the single voice of employers' organisations to be consulted by the government, together with organised labour.²³ ECOP is a member of the ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE) aiming to create a conducive environment to promote productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness, including to engage in tripartite mechanisms to achieve their goals.²⁴ The confederation is also a member of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

ECOP's members are primarily individual corporations and other business membership organisations. It delivers services in training, education, and development programmes.²⁵ The Technical Working Group (TWG) on labour and social policy issues is a forum to discuss pending labour policy and bills that will ensure the incorporation of the views of various industry groups and foreign chambers.

The previously mentioned executive order that banned illegal contracting and subcontracting attracted reservations from ECOP because of the

lack of an exact definition of security of tenure, and the possible loose or abused rules of engagement in the enforcement of specific prohibitions. Many employers contended that the order could obliterate the country's micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).²⁶ The security of tenure law of 2020 bans labour-only contracting but still allows legitimate job contracting and fixed-term employment.

In April 2020, ECOP launched the innovative e-Campus, a learning management system (LMS) that allows ECOP to offer courses and programmes, either fully online or through a blended approach. The ECOP eCampus offers 60 courses, and the amount of training services per week has increased fast.²⁷

Currently, ECOP is working on a policy framework on labour and employment, strengthening bipartite relations at national and enterprise levels, and increasing the capacity of employers' organisations to promote OSH compliance among their members.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The scope of the social dialogue is determined by the number of workers organised, the number of collective bargaining agreements concluded and how labour education services are being extended in the Philippines. Additionally, it refers to a labour relations system that encourages less adversarial modes of settling disputes and ensures the speedy disposition of labour cases. Social partners are active in tripartism via information sharing, consultations, fora, and dialogues.

The country has ratified the ILO's Tripartite Consultation Convention (C144) but not the Collective Bargaining Convention (C154). Social dialogue is supported by the national legal framework, covering nine pieces of legislation consisting of acts, executive orders, and DoLE Department Orders, not to mention a declared state policy in the Labour Code.²⁸

The employers' view that cooperation in labour-employer relations is quite effective (revisit Table 3

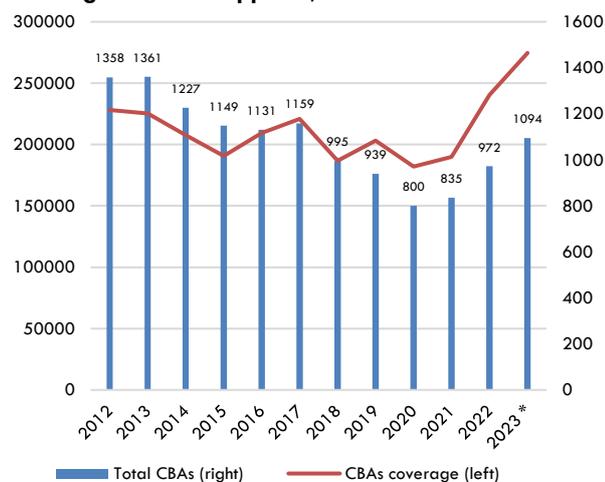
above, cooperation in labour-employer relations indicator). The workers' outlook is likewise relatively positive in tripartite social dialogue institutions. For instance, under the Executive Order 180, there was the Public Sector Labour Management Council (PSLMC), promoting a form of social dialogue in the public sector. This institution was limited to certain national agencies, including the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Labor and Employment. The country ratified the ILO's Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention (C151) in 2017 resulted from extensive consultations among the tripartite constituents.

The social partners also pursue bilateral social dialogue endeavours; for example, jointly, the ECOP, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philippine Exporters Confederation, Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, Federation of Free Workers and Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa requested the government to increase the allocation for the Covid-19 Adjustment Measures Programme (CAMP) in 2020.

Although the right to collective bargaining is recognised by law, the legal framework faces hurdles to realise it and being haunted by the widespread informal economy.

Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) in the private sector are not practised at national level. Instead, they are bargained between management and federated unions at enterprise level. Figure 4 shows that the number of CBAs declined during the late 2010s but rebounded at the beginning of the 2020s. The ratio of CBAs coverage to employees was <1%, indicating that it remains a very underdeveloped factor. In contrast, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average collective bargaining coverage was 32% in 2020. Even the Philippines' latest 2019/2020 Integrated Survey on Labour and Employment registered a CBA coverage of 6.3%; with around 330,000 workers being covered.²⁹

Figure 4: Collective Bargaining Agreements and coverage in the Philippines, 2012-2023



* As of 1st quarter 2023.

Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview.

Public sector unions' collective negotiations agreements (CNAs) are registered in the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The CSC is the government's overall personnel department dealing with issues relating to government-owned and controlled corporation (GOCC). There were 219 GOCCs as of 2022; both receive subsidies and pay dividends to the national government.³⁰ Some unions in the public sector were creative to include demands, called "Salary Extenders," interpreted as savings such as requesting for shuttle busses, free drinking fountains and mineral water, provision of coffee and others. They also managed to request for use of public lands for livelihood projects of the union.

Skills development is rarely mentioned in collective bargaining agreements and only at the regional level. These agreements are minor inclusions of 'skills training' and job enrichment under the heading of 'productivity enhancement'. Studies revealed that trade union involvement has waned in the country since unions' interest and participation in skills development has not been as strong as their interest in promoting union organisation, collective bargaining and protecting workers' rights.³¹

Central tripartite institutions

Numerous consultation bodies aim to promote social dialogue, and they meet regularly. There are different types of tripartite bodies:

Central consultative bodies:

- National Tripartite Advisory Committee (NTAC).
- National Tripartite Industrial Peace Councils (NTIPC) and its various sub-committees, including the Standing Committee on Social Dialogue. These committees are spread out at regional, provincial, city, and municipality levels.
- National Industrial Peace Council Monitoring Body.

Other policy-making bodies:

- Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).
- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).
- Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC).
- National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC).
- Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).
- Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC).
- Tripartite Voluntary Arbitration Advisory Council (TVAAC).

Other bodies with policy-making functions where the DoLE and social partners are represented:

- Social Security Commission (SSC).
- Home Mutual Development Fund (HDMF).
- Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA).
- Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC).

Quasi-Judicial Bodies:

- National Labour Relations Commission (NLRC).
- National Wages and Productivity (NWPC).

Quasi-Legislative Bodies:

- Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs).

The leading active institutions are summarised below:

National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council

The National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (NTIPC) was reconstituted in 2013 as the main consultative and advisory mechanism with the DoLE. Organised workers, employers, and government can discuss labour and employment-relevant policies in the council. It is mandated to formulate tripartite views, recommendations and proposals on labour, economic and social concerns for submission to the president or congress. TIPC's have also set up tripartite industry councils at regional, provincial, municipal and industry levels (automotive, banking, construction, clothing and textile, hotel and restaurant, sugar, and maritime). The public sector union representatives to the 14 Regional Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (RTIPC) must be appointed solely from PUBLIK nominees.

The NTIPC's Executive Committee has been active, including agreeing a joint guideline with NAGKAISA in 2021. In recent years, the NTIPC's results have endorsed the Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) Programme, part of the reform of the labour arbitration and adjudication system (see more in the Labour Dispute Settlement System sub-section). Trade unions proposed in the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (TIPC) to reform the provisions on voluntary recognition for simplified procedures in compliance with the ILO Convention Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise (C087).

National Industry Tripartite Council

The National Industry Tripartite Council (NITC) is chaired by the DoLE and is composed of workers' and employers' representatives, as the needs of the industry may require.

The Bureau of Labour Relations (BLR) coordinates with four committees on rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialogue. It also coordinates with the regional or local TIPC's and industry tripartite councils (ITC's). A regional or local ITC consistently respects local autonomy; and the governor or mayor in the local unit concerned must

be given priority in heading the ITC. An ITC comprises regional or local industry representatives from the workers' and employers' sectors and other government agencies directly involved with the specific industry. There are eight national ITCs:

- Automotive Assembly Industry Tripartite Council (AAITC).
- Banking Industry Tripartite Council (BITC).
- Construction Industry Tripartite Council (CITC).
- Clothing And Textile Industry Tripartite Council (CTITC).
- Hotel and Restaurant Tripartite Consultative Body, Inc. (HRTCB).
- Sugar Tripartite Council (STC).
- Maritime Industry Tripartite Council (MITC).
- Land-based Tripartite Consultative Council (LTCC).

Some ITCs meet every month, while others have agreed to meet bi-monthly or quarterly.

Public Sector Labour Management Council (PSLMC)

The PSLMC is a consultative and advisory mechanism lodged with the DoLE. The expansion of membership in the PSLMC allows elected sectoral representatives to participate during the deliberation of policies on public sector unionism at the level of the PSLMC-Technical Working Group. However, the members of the PSLMC are exclusively government representatives, while representatives of public servants' organisations do not have a right to vote in its discussions and deliberations and can only participate during PSLMC deliberations.³²

Labour Dispute Settlement System

The Labour Code subjects all problems affecting labour and employment to mandatory mediation-conciliation. The DoLE provides mediation services through the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) with regional branches. The NCMB is an agency attached to the DoLE and offers different services for the Labour Management Council (LMC). The board also mediates and arbitrates between labour and management,

including disputes concerning strikes and lockouts, which are only possible if they are related to violations of unfair labour practice, a collective bargaining deadlock or a gross violation of collective bargaining laws.

Table 4 shows that preventive mediation cases slowed down during the early 2020s compared to the late 2010s. Instead, the average duration to settle increased.

Table 4: Alternative Disputes Resolution results in the Philippines, 2019-2022

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Preventive Mediation				
Mediation cases	524	339	451	390
Settlement rate	90%	87%	92%	91%
Average duration to settle.	30	35	35	32
Strikes/lockouts				
Cases handled	21	11	4	8
Man-days lost	146,865	143,474	13,160	15,489

Source: The Department of Labour and Employment's National Conciliation and Mediation Board, ADR Updates.

The Single-Entry Approach Programme (SEnA) was institutionalised to de-judicial the dispute-settlement procedures and foster fair, speedy and inexpensive labour justice. The SEnA provides a 30-day mandatory conciliation-mediation service on all individual and collective labour and employment disputes as the first approach. The programme aims to reduce the number of assumptions of jurisdiction cases and cases certified for compulsory arbitration. It is interesting to note that demand for SEnA services was high at the end of the 2010s. However, it was low at the beginning of the 2020s; for instance, requests for assistance under the SEnA programme totalled 59,927 in 2018 but fell to 3,603 in 2021. In 2021, the national disposition rate was 96% or 3,470 Requests for Assistance (RFAs) were processed. Likewise, the national settlement rate was posted at 61%, or 2,212 RFAs settled. Since the SEnA prescribes a mandatory 30-day conciliation-mediation, the average days to settle cases have improved from fifteen in 2018 to eleven days in 2021. Notices of strike and lockout are exempt from coverage.³³

If mediation fails, the union may issue a strike notice. Parties may bring any dispute to mediation but strikes or lockouts must be related to acts of unfair labour practice, a gross violation of collective bargaining laws, or a collective bargaining deadlock. The legislation permits employers to dismiss union officers who knowingly participate in an illegal strike. The DoLE claims that the incidence of strikes has continually dropped during the last decade. Strikes/lockout cases fell at the beginning of the 2020s (revisit Table 4).

The Philippine jurisprudence attempts to ensure that any doubts in the interpretation of labour-related law, especially the Labour Code, are resolved more in favour of labour than management.³⁴

Under Republic Act No. 6715, amended to the Labour Code, the operating mechanism of the labour-management cooperation programme functions in organised establishments in the mentioned Labour-Management Council (LMC). In an unorganised establishment, the institution is called a Labour-Management Committee. The council/committee aims to foster better relations between labour and management to supplement the grievance process when necessary and the CBA. LMCs operate with several features, such as i) labour representatives are elected by a majority of the workers in the establishment; ii) there are two co-chairmen - one from labour and one from management - who serve concurrently or on a rotating basis; iii) a third-party facilitator acceptable to labour and management may assist the LMC, particularly in the early stages of its operation; iv) sub-committees may be formed to address specific concerns.

TRADE UNION RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The Philippines is among the ten worst countries for workers, ranked 5 out of 5+ (5+ is the worst) on the Global Rights Index in 2023, which has been similar since 2017, although it even dropped to 5+ in 2021. It represents no guarantee of rights: Countries with a rating of 5 are the worst countries in the world to work in. While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no

access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices.³⁵

The worrisome high-ranking links to a severe violation of the right to free speech and assembly related to violent suppression of popular dissent. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) argued that workers and their representatives in the Philippines remain particularly vulnerable to violent attacks, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests. Trade unionists, maliciously red-tagged by the former President Duterte Administration, remain under immediate threat from the police and the army, which has conducted targeted raids against them. Over 50 trade unionists have been killed since President Duterte came to power in 2016. Strikes have led to the prosecution of union leaders. Twenty-eight union representatives were illegally arrested and detained in March and December 2020, and seven union leaders were killed between March 2020 and April 2021.

The situation was likely to worsen for workers as the Anti-Terrorism Act, which came into force in July 2020, granted even more extended powers to the police and the military to attack and harass workers and trade union activists.

From 2019 to 2021, the ITUC listed 36 cases of trade union rights violations dealing with a wide range of issues; for example, pasta workers arrested for going on strike; harassment of unions involved in the Coca-Cola dispute; education unionists targeted; trade unions still targeted in intimidatory “red-tagging” campaign.³⁶

Workers face several challenges in exercising their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Some employers have reportedly chosen to employ workers who could not legally organise, such as short-term contracts and foreign national workers, to minimise unionisation and avoid other rights accorded to “regular” workers. The non-governmental Centre for Trade Union and Human Rights contended that this practice led to declining unions and numbers of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements. Employers also often abuse contract labour provisions by rehiring

employees shortly after the expiration of the previous contract. The Department of Labour has reported multiple cases of workers alleging employers refuse to bargain.³⁷

A total of 32 Freedom of Association cases were registered by the ILO’s complaints procedures register: one case is active and confidential, four cases are listed as a follow-up, and 27 are closed.³⁸ In the active case, the complainant organisation, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), alleges the extrajudicial killings of three trade union leaders and denounces the failure of the government to investigate these cases and bring the perpetrators to justice adequately. The complainants further allege the use of threats and murder attempts against a fourth trade union leader and his family, who have been forced into hiding, and they denounce the government’s failure to investigate this case and protect the victims adequately. The failure to investigate and prosecute in these cases could reinforce the climate of impunity, violence, and insecurity, damaging the exercise of trade union rights. Additionally, the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) listed 69 reported killings of trade union leaders and organisers, and about 400 other violations of Convention C087.

The Philippines has ratified the ILO’s Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (C105) and Domestic Workers Convention (C189); the Labour Code prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labour. However, forced labour is still applied in practice in the Philippines. This issue is mainly in fishing and other maritime industries, gold mines, debt bondage agriculture, and other areas of the informal economy, including domestic service, forced begging, and small factories. Trade unions reported that continued poor compliance with the law was partly due to the government’s lack of capacity to inspect labour practices in the informal economy.³⁹ The Global Slavery Index ranks the Philippines as 30 out of 167 countries (1 is worst) with an estimated prevalence at 7.7 victims per 1,000 population in 2018.⁴⁰

WORKING CONDITIONS

The Philippines' government controls and regulates the minimum wage. No workers in the Philippines should be paid less than the minimum wage states. Employers who do not pay salaries according to minimum wage can be subject to fines. The minimum wage system is complex and varies by region and industry. The minimum wages are set by tripartite regional wage boards located in every region.

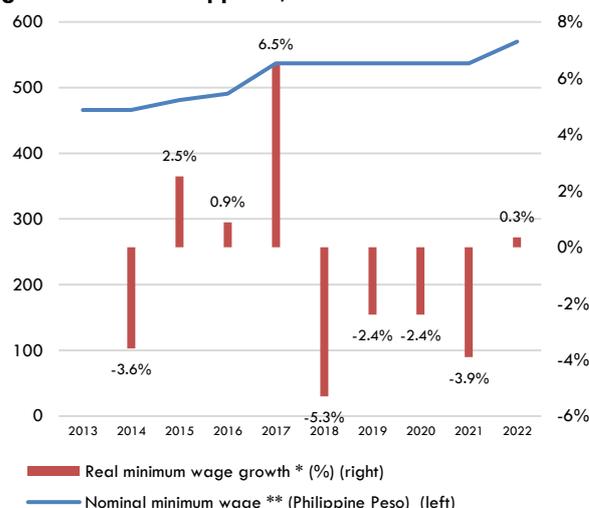
The latest adjustments of the minimum wages in the seventeen regions were in 2022. They diverge significantly, from the highest minimum wage in non-agricultural of Philippine Peso (PP) 570 per day (US\$10.5) in the National Capital Region (NCR), to the lowest in Region V with PP 345 (US\$6.3). The NCR also has the highest agriculture minimum wage of PP 533 (US\$9.8) per day, down to PP 312 (US\$5.7) in Region I.

The country is positioned in the middle of gross monthly minimum wage levels in Asia and the Pacific. The minimum wage level relative to the median wage was about 65%. Estimations suggest that the Philippines' annualised productivity growth was 4.3% during the 2010s compared with -0.2% annualised real minimum wage growth.⁴¹

The wage and work hours law does not cover a broad group of workers. First, wage boards exempted certain employers such as distressed establishments, new business enterprises, retail and service establishments with fewer than ten employees, and establishments affected by natural calamities. Second, the widespread informal economy creates loopholes in labour regulations, including minimum wage, often due to a lack of awareness or incentives.

Figure 5 shows that the real minimum wage (nominal deducted for inflation) deteriorated from 2018 to 2021 and only improved marginally in 2022. Among other reasons, this was linked with the Covid-19 pandemic's negative impact. This situation holed out many workers' income purchasing power and living conditions, balancing them on the poverty line.

Figure 5: Nominal minimum wage trend and its real growth in the Philippines, 2013-2022



* Real minimum wage is based on nominal minimum wage deducted of inflation in consumer prices.

** Refer to daily minimum wages in non-agriculture sector in the National Capital Region, which is the highest rate in the Philippines.

Source: Trading Economics; own calculation on real minimum wage.

Domestic workers are protected by the Kasambahay Law (Magna Carta for Domestic Workers) that entitles household workers' rights, linked with other laws. They work under a different wage and benefit system that lays out minimum wage requirements. It is notably lower than regular minimum wage requirements, payments into social welfare programmes are lower, and it mandates only one day off a week. Public data are scarce, but reports suggest that two million or more persons are employed as domestic workers, with nearly 85% being women or girls, some as young as age 15.⁴² Organising domestic workers are functioning in the Domestic Workers Union and the United Domestic Workers of the Philippines, among others.

Contracting or subcontracting has been a hot topic in the Philippines since the late 2010s. The application of controversial contractual forms known as end-of-contract ("endo") with a maximum five-month period has created loopholes in the Labour Code's labour-only contracting, and this frees employers from providing workers with benefits (e.g., health and social security). To end the widespread application of "endos", the government launched an executive order in 2018, prohibiting any contracting or subcontracting arrangement to circumvent the workers' right to security of tenure,

self-organisation, collective bargaining, and peaceful concerted activities. It was not until December 1, 2021, that the Security of Tenure Law, known as the End Endo Law, was passed by both houses of Congress. However, the bill was vetoed by then President Duterte amidst protests from different labour unions calling to end contractualization. A new bill, the Civil Service Security of Tenure Act of 2023 was filed in the Senate. The bill seeks to amend the Labour Code, prohibiting labour-only contracting under the law, but permitting legitimate job hiring and fixed-term employment under for all causal and contractual employees of the government. Representations from the Philippines' trade union movement criticised the bill because it provides dodges for the abusive practices of employers, who would still be allowed to hire relievers, project workers, and seasonal employees.⁴³

The number of labour inspectors in the Philippines rose by 70% from 2020 to 2021, reaching 1,210 deployed nationwide, supporting increased inspection compliance. However, micro and small-sized enterprises, as well as activities in the informal economy, are exempt from inspections. The coverage was estimated at around one inspector per 22,000 employees (or one per 34,000 of total employment) in 2021. The ILO is concerned if the ratio exceeds one inspector per 20,000 workers in transition economies and one inspector per 40,000 workers in less developed countries.⁴⁴ Thus, the Philippines is moving towards this threshold.

The Workmen's Compensation Act and the benefits granted by the Employees Compensation Commission cover public and private sector employees and their dependents in the event of work-connected contingencies. Cases of non-fatal occupational injury declined during the 2010s in the Philippines, standing at medium-level among ASEAN countries, but relatively high for fatal cases (Table 5). These data suggest that the Philippines is somewhat behind the SDG goal to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers; see more in Appendix Table 12, Indicator 8.1.1).

Table 5: Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers in ASEAN countries, 2010s average

Country	Fatal	Non-fatal
Malaysia	5.8	665
Myanmar	3.9	15
Philippines	6.1	473
Singapore	1.7	371
Thailand	6.8	512

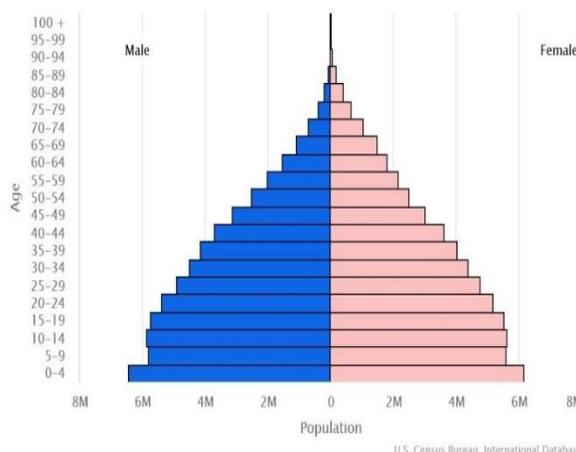
Note: data from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, and Vietnam were not available.

Source: own estimations based on data from the ILO's KILM SDGs indicators.

WORKFORCE

The Philippines' population growth declined from 2.6% in 1980 to 1.5% in 2021.⁴⁵ The population reached about 116 million in 2023, growing by 46% (at least 36 million) since 2000. The fertility rate (births per woman) fell from 4.7 on average in the 1980s to 2.7 in 2021. The life expectancy rate increased from 64 years in the 1980s, peaking at 72 from 2017-2020 to 69 in 2021. Figure 6 illustrates that population growth has experienced an upsurge in recent years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Philippines faces the looming challenge of an ageing population, like other Asian economies, with mounting financial pressure on social protection such as health and eldercare pensions. Official data suggest that there are at present 12 million senior citizens in the Philippines (60+ years).

Figure 6: Population pyramid based on the age-sex structure of the population in the Philippines, 2023



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, The Philippines.

Based on the latest national labour force survey data from 2021, around 41 million Filipinos are in employment, with a ratio of employment-to-population of 55% in 2021, slightly above the World's lower-middle-income average of 51%. The number of employed grew weakly by 14% from 2011 to 2019. It even plummeted by 7% in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, costing at least 3 million workers, but it rebounded in 2021 by 4.3%. Generally, employment growth has been driven by the adult group (25+ years). In contrast, the youth (15-24 years) has dropped by 11% during the last decade, linked with improved school enrolment rate at higher education level and curbing the youth bulge (see more in the Education and Youth sections).

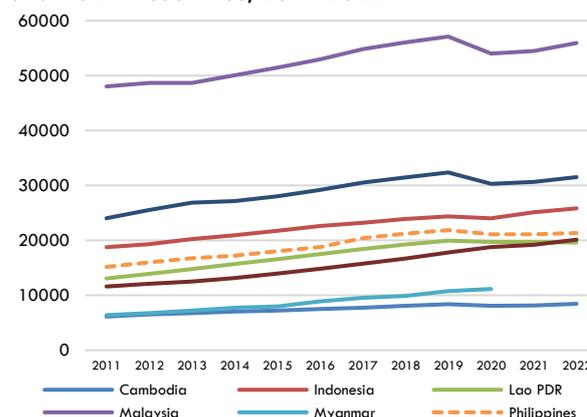
Around 9.4% of the employed work in the public sector, while 91% are in the private sector. The share of employees (paid employment jobs) gradually grew from 55% in 2011 to 64% in 2021. Instead, Filipino workers operating as self-employed (employers, own-account workers, contributing family workers and members of producers' cooperatives) fell from 45% to 36% in the period.

The Philippines has demonstrated a low employment elasticity: The recent economic growth was accompanied by significant labour reallocation from agriculture toward services and industry, with an increasingly dominant role for the services sector in the country's output and employment. Aggregated sectoral employment in the Philippines illustrates the scopes of the shifts. The agricultural sector fell from 33% in 2011 to 25% in 2021. Employment in the industry sector increased from 15% to 19%; manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment only grew marginally and lost pace at the early 2020s as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, reaching 7.9% in 2021. Although the manufacturing share in value-added has remained largely unchanged, there was a shift in structure from lower-technology industries to medium-high and high-technology manufacturing industries. This indicates that the industry sector's progress is supporting the SDG target for 2030, depending on a significantly raised industrial share

of employment and GDP (see more in Appendix Table 12, Indicator 9.2.2).

Figure 7 below shows that labour productivity in the Philippines grew during the 2010s, staying in the middle of the ASEAN countries. However, it lost pace at the beginning of the 2020s due to the Covid-19 pandemic impact. Labour productivity is lower than in other ASEAN countries because relatively few firms receive foreign capital; less than 10% of all firms. Studies have found that the higher the share of foreign capital in firms, the more productive they are. This suggests that FDI brings knowledge, boosting productivity growth in firms.⁴⁶ Labour market rigidities and informality also challenge a higher upsurge in labour productivity.

Figure 7: Output per worker trend for the Philippines and ASEAN countries, 2011-2022



Note: Output per worker is based on GDP constant 2017 international \$ at PPP. Brunei Darussalam is not included, representing international \$ 130,083 in 2022.

Source: International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

Since 2010, the Philippines' labour share of national income peaked at 47% in 2011, slowly falling to reach its current rate of 39% in 2019 and 2020. It is the lowest rate among ASEAN countries, except Brunei Darussalam, down to 36%. The previously mentioned weak real wage growth (revisit Figure 5) implies that workers have not benefitted from the productivity growth. The rising power of new technology, globalisation, and the persistently high informal economy question the Philippines' capacity to reach the SDG for better equality (see Appendix Table 12, Indicators 10.4.1).

Survey data suggest that the Philippines is emerging as among the top market for the global workforce in 2023, as companies worldwide embrace remote/hybrid setups with a preference for Filipino talent, even as salary rates are rising in parallel with the relatively high inflation. It has been observed that foreign organisations have expanded their service centres in the Philippines, with many looking to supplement their workforce with talent in the Philippines. Furthermore, not only are 81% of Filipino talent optimistic about new job opportunities available in their sectors, but 56% of professionals are also looking to change jobs in 2023.⁴⁷

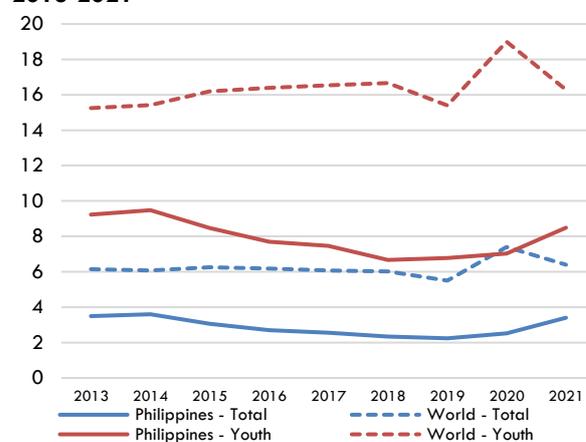
Another aspect of the labour market landscape is that 1,080,810 business enterprises operated in the country in 2021. Of these, most were micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), while just 0.4% were large enterprises. Micro enterprises constituted 90% of total establishments, followed by small enterprises at 8.6% and medium-sized enterprises at 0.4%. Together, these MSMEs generated almost 5.5 million jobs, or 65% of the country's total employment. Micro enterprises produced the most significant share (33%), closely followed by small enterprises (25%), while medium-sized enterprises were far behind at 7.1%. Meanwhile, large enterprises generated a total of approximately 3.0 million jobs or 35% of the country's overall employment.⁴⁸

The Philippines is one of the top outsourcing destinations, as it offers expertise in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. These BPO sectors focus on back-office operations (Human Resources, finance, and IT) and front-office functions, such as customer support and call centres. Estimations suggest that the Philippine BPO industry contributes nearly US\$30 billion annually to the economy. It is estimated that 1.3 million Filipinos were employed in over 1,000 BPO companies in 2019, with about 8-10% annual growth. It is assessed that the country holds 10-15% of the global BPO market.⁴⁹

Unemployment

The Philippines Labour Force Surveys show that the total employment rate has been low during the last decade but with an upsurge at the beginning of the 2020s as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Still, it is significantly lower than the world lower-middle income average. This trend was similar to the youth unemployment rate and even remarkably lower than the world average, supported by the high negative net migration (see Figure 8 and the Migration sub-section).

Figure 8: Unemployment trends in the Philippines and World lower-middle income, Total and Youth, %, 2013-2021



Source: International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

Unemployment is mainly an urban phenomenon for youth and is concentrated among workers with intermediate and advanced levels of education. Subsistence farming is concentrated during planting and harvesting but not engaged full-time throughout the year, creating some "disguised unemployment".

Since the formal sector is not providing sufficient new jobs, many workers are pushed to generate some income through causal informal activities, often with lower hours, to survive. It is worth mentioning that unemployment is statistically a part of the employed group, excluding persons outside the workforce. In the Philippines, around 45% of the working-age population was projected as economically inactive in 2021. Stated differently, large potential unemployment is hidden by this group.

Migration

The Philippines legal migration framework covers several laws, including the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act. They have also ratified two of four ILO migrant-specific instruments: The Migration for Employment Convention (C097) and the Migrant Workers Convention (C143). Migration issues were mainstreamed in the Philippine Development Plan (2017-2022) and the new plan covering 2023-2028. The latter focuses on ensuring safe and orderly overseas migration. It further notes the rapid and massive migration of people into the digital space is an opportunity to push toward fully digitalising sectors that have not been able to pivot their processes to maximise the potential efficiency brought about by digitalisation.

Many Filipinos move to improve their job opportunities, follow their family members, marriage, education, or shock responses such as conflicts and climate. Especially young people are attracted to move from rural areas to urban zones driven by the manufacturing and construction sectors. There is also considerable rural-to-rural movement, especially for seasonal agricultural work and mining.

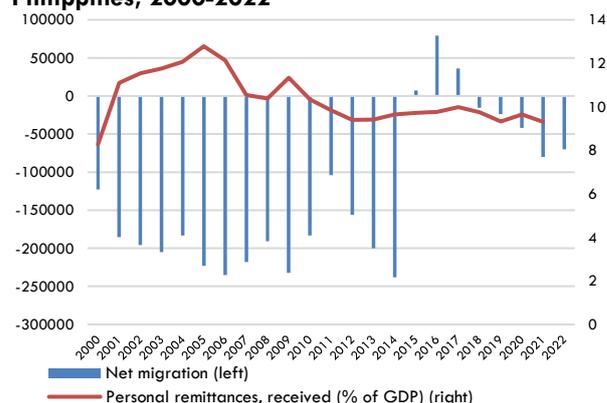
The 2018 National Migration Survey (NMS) is the first nationwide survey on migration in the Philippines, revealing that 40% of Filipinos aged 15 years and over are lifetime migrants. More than half (53%) of the lifetime migrants were women. The past five years have been dominated by rural-rural migration and urban-urban migration. Rural-urban migration has been meagrely reflected in the urbanisation rate and only grew slowly from 46% in 2011 to 48% in 2021, and this is significantly lower than Indonesia (57%) and Malaysia (78%) but higher than Cambodia (25%), Laos (37%), Myanmar (32%), and Vietnam (38%).

Out-migration (emigration) has a long history, leading to the World's 9th largest international migrant flow, and becoming part of Filipino culture. Today, 10 million Filipinos live abroad, and more than 1 million Filipinos leave the country each year to work overseas.⁵⁰ Out-migration entangles permanent migrants living abroad and irregular

migrants, i.e., Filipinos who are without valid residence or work permits or people who are overstaying as workers or tourists. These out-migrants are often better educated than internal migrants. Still, those with internal and international migration experience in recent years had the highest proportion of college education among all migrant types. Studies found that losing labour to emigration can cause shortages in some sectors; for instance, the health sector.⁵¹

Net migration became more unbalanced after the 1990s, peaking in the 2000s. It reverted during the 2010s with a positive inflow at the late 2010s. However, at the beginning of the 2020s, a negative net migration started to accelerate (see more in Figure 9). The high negative net migration is a result of Filipinos seeking higher wages in other countries. It is worth mentioning that the Philippines put in place a system to support their migrant workers affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, helping those who had been stranded to return home. According to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, the locations for registered Filipino emigrants are mainly in the U.S. (60%), followed by Canada (20%), Japan (6.2%), Australia (5.8%), and Italy (2.9%). The Philippines is among the Asian-origin countries with the highest proficiency rating in English, the 22nd in the world.

Figure 9: Net migration and personal remittance in the Philippines, 2000-2022



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

Slowly growing returnee migrants support the net migration changes. Investigations have found that these returnees' potential in human capital development seems limited, as few have acquired

more education abroad. In most cases, returnee migrants are overqualified for their jobs in their host countries - only a minority consider employment and investment opportunities in the Philippines as a motive for return. About 70% of returnee migrants reported they experience difficulties finding a job in the Philippines on their return. Often informal self-employment or business creation are their only options.⁵²

The Philippines is the world's 4th top remittance recipient country, and this is a central part of the economy. It peaked at 13% in 2005 but gradually fell to 9.3% of GDP in 2021 (revisit Figure 9); significantly higher than the East and Pacific average at 0.4%. Despite the global Covid-19 pandemic's economic impact, remittances from Filipinos only fell marginally by 0.3 percentage points from 2020 to 2021. These remittances are invested in education and consumption, not to mention significantly higher than foreign direct investments.

The country has developed a public-private partnership to manage overseas employment, from recruitment, deployment, and redeployment to return. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) listed 27 bilateral labour agreements.⁵³ For instance, the Philippines and Kuwait signed an agreement on workers' rights in 2018. Workers would be guaranteed food, housing, clothing, and health insurance, and employment contracts would be renewed only with approval from Philippine officials.⁵⁴

The Philippines has a large segment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from disasters, conflict, and violence. Concerning disasters, 60 million persons were displaced from 2008 to 2022; for example, 5.4 million in 2022. These events were linked with 560 disaster events, mainly climate- and weather-related like storms and floods. Additionally, 3.2 million persons were internally displaced for other reasons in the same period, including 123,000 in 2022.⁵⁵ Especially in the Mindanao region, 110,000 people have been internally displaced since 2012 because of armed conflicts in the southern region of the country, in which separatist

rebels and Islamist terror groups like *Abu Sayyaf* are fighting for greater autonomy or the creation of an independent state for the Muslim Moro minority (officially 5% of the population, primarily located on the island of Mindanao). The humanitarian crisis in Marawi in 2017 has caused fatal consequences for citizens in the region. According to UNCHR, a total of 360,000 persons are still internally displaced because of the crisis. Additionally, the majority of IDPs in the Philippines are women and children. Refugees are a minority group in the country: refugee population by country or territory of origin reached 521 persons in 2021.

Informal Economy

The informal economy is widespread in the Philippines. Informal workers operate as independent, self-employed, and small-scale producers. They are often operating with loopholes in labour and business regulations such as minimum wage, contractual employment conditions, paying taxes, and social security schemes. As depicted in the Doing Business Index (revisit Appendix Table 16), the business regulations are cumbersome, inhibiting firms from formalising their operations or paying taxes, often due to a lack of awareness or incentives. This adverse environment further challenges industrial relations, organising workers, and performing collective bargaining through social dialogue.

A series of bills were consolidated that aim to protect informal workers such as the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy and the Freelance Workers' Protection Act, both have passed the committee stage but not have yet been enacted into law. Recent the Philippines national laws and regulations related to the informal economy encompass Department Order No. 230-21 Guidelines on Support for Workers in the Informal Economy of 2021.

The government promotes implementation of livelihood programmes and assistance, providing employment opportunities, and identifying measures to address the root causes of informality among workers. However, the scope of these

livelihood assistance programmes remains very thin at approximately 0.7% of workers in vulnerable employment.⁵⁶

National forums dealing with informal economy workers, and specific policies addressing the status of informal economy workers, took place in 2022. Foremost amongst specific union policy recommendations is the "15-Point Labour Agenda" rolled out by the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU). In addition, the Women Workers' United, a forum tackling informal economy workers, is a part of the Women's Priority Legislative Agenda (see more in the Gender sub-section). Unionism is emerging in the informal economy; some unions have been doing a lot of organising of informal workers at the community level using strategies in social movement unionism.

According to the March 2022 Labour Force Survey of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there were 17 million workers in the informal economy, representing 36% of the total number of employed persons in the Philippines, with a fall by two percentage points since 2018. The latest Labour Force Survey from March 2023 also registered at least two out of five workers (22%) operated in precarious work such as self-employed without any paid employee and working without pay in own family-operated farm or business (Unpaid family worker).⁵⁷ This group is less likely to have formal work arrangements or access to social protection. Instead, they are more at risk during a crisis or shock. Firms' informal payments to public officials skyrocketed during the 2010s (see more in the Table 6).

A study found that the size and development of the informal economy in the Philippines declined from 45% in 1991 to 28% in 2015, benefiting the sectoral shifts in employment and the economy. This range, on average, at 39% from 2004 to 2015, was significantly larger than Indonesia (24%), Laos (30%), Malaysia (32%), Singapore (12%), and Vietnam (19%) but smaller than Thailand (51%) and Myanmar (51%).⁵⁸

Table 6: Status of the Philippines' informal economy

Indicators	%
The informal economy's share of GDP (2015)	28%
Informal employment (2022)	36%
Vulnerable employment (2023)	22%
Informal payments to public officials (% of firms) * (2015)	59%

* Informal payments to public officials are the percentage of firms expected to make informal payments to public officials to "get things done" regarding customs, taxes, licenses, regulations, services, and the like.

Sources: International Monetary Fund, *Shadow Economies Around the World: What Did We Learn Over the Last 20 Years?*, IMF Working Paper, January 2018; Philippines Statistical Authority, *Labour Force Survey March 2023*; The World Bank, *World Development Indicators*.

Informal workers are mainly in the agricultural and service sectors, with 48% and 45%, respectively. Informal workers in the industry sector are low at 6.6%. Around four out of ten informal workers reach elementary school level.⁵⁹ Many other Filipino women work as domestic workers, and are often subject to informal, unsafe working conditions both in the Philippines and those working abroad. Besides, forced labour within the informal economy has been detected and primarily affects women and children. This segment of workers is mainly in fishing, small-scale factories, domestic services, and agriculture in general.

The Philippines government launched a temporary short-term work programme to employ close to one million workers in the informal 'sector' (i.e., an enterprise-based concept) in its Covid-19 response package. It provided temporary employment opportunities to workers in the informal economy, as these workers were particularly vulnerable to economic hardship due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Child Labour

Around 31% of the Philippines' population is 0-14 years old. As outlined in the Population Pyramid above, this segment's growth has lost pace (revisit Figure 6). Reports argue that the Philippines has made "moderate advances" in its long fight against the worst forms of child labour, but resources remain inadequate to accelerate the implementation of programmes.⁶⁰ The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps), which is the flagship of poverty

alleviation via conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, especially supporting children, has demonstrated weak results.⁶¹

The country has ratified two ILO conventions on effectively abolishing child labour (see Appendix Table 14). The Labour Code prohibits employing children younger than age 15, including for domestic service. The law also prohibits the worst forms of child labour. Children between 15 and 17 are limited to eight working hours per day, up to 40 hours per week. The law forbids the employment of persons younger than 18 in hazardous work. The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, enticing some children to leave school before completing their compulsory education. Reports found that the government did not effectively enforce the law.⁶²

The root of child labour is linked with poverty and armed conflicts. The latest official data from 2011 registered 3.3 million, or 12% as working children; 7.9% of children are engaged in child labour and 7.7% in hazardous work. Working boys (63%) outnumbered working girls (37%). The country's child labour has been slightly higher than East Asia and the Pacific averages (see Table 7).

Table 7: Status of child labour in the Philippines and Asia & the Pacific, latest data

Country/ Region	Type	Rate
Philippines (2011)	Working children	12%
	Child labour	7.9%
	Hazardous work	7.7%
Asia & the Pacific (2020)	Working children	-
	Child labour	5.6%
	Hazardous work	2.6%

Note: Children in employment: unpaid family workers are people who work without pay in a market-oriented establishment operated by a related person living in the same household. Child labour: work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling. Hazardous work: children in dangerous and unhealthy conditions that can lead to a child being killed, injured, or made ill because of poor safety and health standards or employment conditions.

Sources: Philippines Statistics Authority, 2011 Survey on Children; ILO and UNICEF, Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, 2021.

Child labour continues mostly in rural and remote areas with a lack of education and weak or even

no access to government services. Most child labour is often in family settings. Child workers in gold mining, manufacturing, domestic service, drug trafficking, and garbage scavenging face exposure to hazardous working environments.

Under the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan, the government aimed to reduce cases of child labour by 30%. Updated data concerning child labour coverage were not available to assess progress in the country. At least the school enrolment rates were on the rise during the 2010s, suggesting that child labour is declining (see also the education section). However, the Covid-19 pandemic reversed the gains made in 2020. Achieving the SDG aiming to eradicate all forms of child labour before 2025 requires drastic measures.

Gender

The Philippines has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW. The 1987 constitution recognises the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure fundamental equality before the law of women and men. The government also launched the Magna Carta of Women in 2009; a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognising, protecting, fulfilling, and promoting the rights of Filipino women.

Generally, the Philippines' laws and regulations regarding the life cycle of a working woman score 78 out of 100 (100 is best) in 2023, higher than the regional average across East Asia and the Pacific (73). Regarding laws affecting women's decision to work, the country gets a perfect score affecting their workplace, pay, and entrepreneurship in starting and running a business. However, legal equality for women remains challenged when it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, constraints related to marriage, laws affecting women's work after having children, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension.⁶³ For instance, the gender wage gap is a persistent issue

in the Philippines, with women earning around 14% less than men on average.

The global Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects the scope of gender disparities, ranking the Philippines 101 out of 162 countries (1 is best) in 2021. This medium ranking is mainly due to the relatively high maternal mortality ratio and the gender gap in the labour force participation rate. On the other hand, Filipino women score better than men concerning the population with at least some secondary education.⁶⁴ The other Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) 2022 ranks the Philippines 19 out of 146 countries (1 is best). The country scores relatively high in economic participation and opportunity (16), health and survival (30), educational attainment (46), and political empowerment (35).⁶⁵

Traditional cultural stereotypes linked to gender inequality and discrimination test women's role in labour. For instance, women seeking job opportunities in non-traditional sectors often experience gender discrimination, gender harassment in hiring is common, as is punitive action on women employees when they become pregnant. In addition, no law mandates non-discrimination based on gender in the workplace.

Many women carry the 'double burden', i.e., women's workload weighing on employment, unpaid care, and domestic responsibilities. However, an increasing number of Filipino men are doing household work and are landing jobs formerly done by women. Traditional cultural stereotypes are more present in rural areas and among specific ethnic groups.

Table 8 displays the scope of the Philippines gender gaps in the employment structure. There are significantly fewer women in employment than men, not to mention gaps in employee rates favour men. Both sexes are present in 'vulnerable employment', shown as unskilled labourers, traders, artisans, or subsistence farming, but women with a significantly higher rate. Women's 'double burden' pushes many into informal part-time activities because of time constraints from domestic chores. It is worth

mentioning that the economic downturn in 2020 negatively affected the manufacturing sector linked to exports, where women's employment was more affected than men.

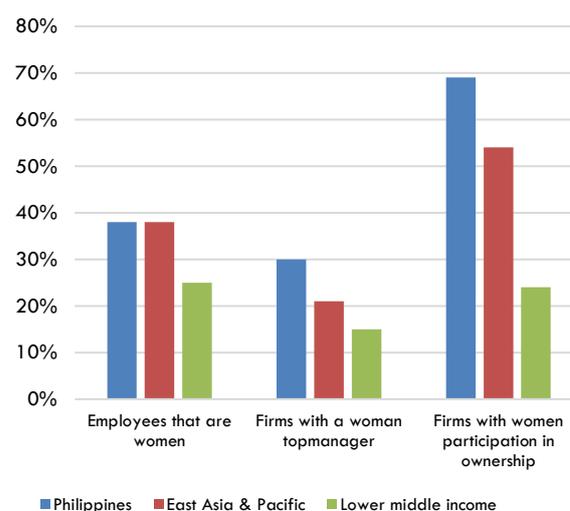
Table 8: Key indicators for labour gender gaps in the Philippines, 2021

	Men	Women
Employment share	61%	39%
Unemployment rate	3.1%	3.8%
Employees rate	67%	59%
Self-employed workers rate	33%	41%

Source: Philippines Labour Force Survey 2021.

According to the latest Philippines Enterprise Survey from 2015, firms with women participating in ownership and firms with a woman top manager are high (Figure 10). The Philippines is the second-best country worldwide on the ability of women to rise to positions of enterprise leadership, and it is the country with the highest percentage of firms with female participation in ownership, which, among other things, is a result of the mentioned positive legal framework. Nevertheless, women entrepreneurs often face constraints that men do not, including limited access to capital and credit due to lack of collateral, lack of information and time constraints imposed by domestic obligations.

Figure 10: Women participation in employment, top management, and ownership in the Philippines, %, 2015



Source: The World Bank, Enterprise Surveys, Philippines 2015.

Youth

The Philippines youth (15-24 years) represent 18% of the population on a slowly dwindling trend and around 14% of employment in 2021.⁶⁶

The Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) 2017-2022 presented a framework for youth and youth-serving groups, agencies, and institutions to promote youth participation. It focused on a schedule for nine policy areas, including economic empowerment to optimise youth participation in the labour force; stop youth participation in vulnerable employment; promote youth participation in entrepreneurial activities; and strengthen youth participation in employment enrichment support systems. The current Marcos administration has so far not updated the PYDP.

The country's latest ranking on the Global Youth Development Index was 133 out of 181 countries (1 is best) in 2020, a poor position among other ASEAN countries, except Laos (136). The other 2023 Global Youth Well-being Index ranks the Philippines as 18 out of 29 countries (1 is best), benefiting from a strong education system, but they face significant health risks.

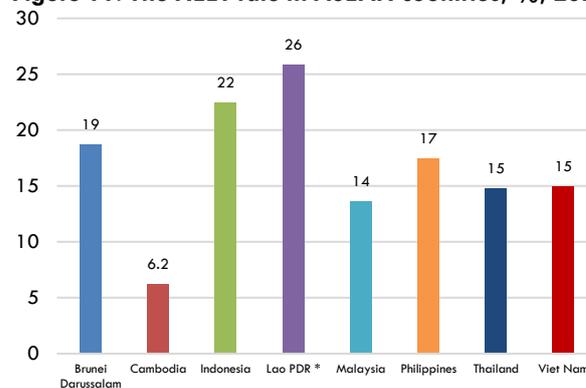
Some facets of working youth in the Philippines are that a majority (58%) have full-time jobs, and another (44%) have part-time employment. Over a quarter (28%) are seeking another job for additional income. Close to one out of two (47%) agree that job security is unimportant when considering employment.

Prolonged school-to-work transition is linked to structural unemployment; it takes a high school graduate up to three years to find the first job and four years to find a permanent wage job. At higher education levels, it takes a college graduate one year to find the first job and up to two years to find a permanent position. On the positive side, the youth unemployment rate declined during the 2010s and stood significantly lower than the South-Eastern Asia average (revisit Figure 8 above). The high emigration rate somewhat overshadows this relatively low youth unemployment and note that youth compose half of the unemployed population.

Another weakness for Filipino youth is the mismatch between job requirements and graduates' qualifications. According to the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, approximately one million college and vocational graduates face a job-skills mismatch. Job mismatch is also the primary factor for under-employment in the country.⁶⁷

The NEET rate (i.e., those not in employment, education, or training) fell from 25% in 2010 to 18% in 2021 in the Philippines. This drop was considerable among women: the NEET rate gender gap dropped from 14 to 6.5 percentage points from 2010 to 2021. Young people from lower-income families are more present in the NEET rate than high-income families. The Philippines' NEET rate is high among ASEAN countries (see Figure 11). The specific SDG goal targeting 2030 to reduce the NEET rate substantially appears to be going in the right direction in the Philippines (see more in Appendix Table 12). However, the economic downturn in 2020 caused by the Covid-19 pandemic triggered an upsurge in the NEET rate, although it fell sharply in 2021, reaching its, so far, lowest level.

Figure 11: The NEET rate in ASEAN countries, %, 2021



* Data from 2017.

Note: The NEET rate is the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.

Source: International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).

Active youth are often among informal workers or short-term labour contracting side-lined for social protection. These groups are challenged by inadequate training and career opportunities, and they often earn less than the minimum wages

compared to the non-youth groups. Insufficient job creation in the formal sector and cultural aspects discourage many Filipino youths and they become economically inactive in the labour market.

Due to social distancing policies, the Covid-19 pandemic affected youth at various levels, such as health and well-being, education, employment, and civic activities. For example, youth were the most vulnerable to lay-offs. While they may have benefited from financial help provided to workers, the government adopted no special provisions to address youth unemployment during the pandemic apart from the guidelines issued on alternative work arrangements. Instead, some smaller programmes like the Government Internship Programme (GIP) in local government units brought benefits to some unemployed youth.⁶⁸

EDUCATION

The Philippines implemented comprehensive law reforms of the education system during the last decade. These aimed to boost enrolment levels, graduation rates, and mean years of schooling in elementary and secondary education and improve higher education quality (see more in Appendix Table 17). Regulations institutionalise the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF). The PQF sets the levels of educational qualifications and sets the standards for qualification outcomes.

Government spending on education levels in the Philippines has continued to fall since its peak at 20% of government expenditure in 2017, down to 15% in 2022. It furthermore dropped below the international Education 2030 Framework for Action's benchmark for government financing of education to allocate at least 4% to 6% of GDP to education.⁶⁹

Generally, the country falls behind in the region in education and shows poor performance in international standardised student assessments. For instance, the Philippines has one of the highest dropout rates among the ASEAN countries, with 6.4% of elementary students and 7.8% of secondary school students. Some of the reasons for

these high rates are that many students skip class to find some income to support their families and conflicts in zones like the southern regions in Mindanao disrupt families' lives. The out-of-school children rate skyrocketed by 148% from 2020 to 2021, reaching 1.2 million children due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many schools lack supplies and teachers.⁷⁰

The Philippines' literacy rate for the population aged 15+ increased from 93% in 2000 to 96% in 2019, like East Asia and the Pacific average of 95%. The country's Labour Force Survey data from 2020 revealed that just 1.1% of total employment by education had less than basic education. Around 63% of employment have basic education. At the intermediate level, it is relatively low at 6.1%, while at the advanced level, it is up at 30%. It is worth mentioning that women achieve somewhat more education than men, but the former have a significantly lower employment share than the latter (Table 9 and revisit Table 8Table 8).

Table 9: Employment by education, age 15+, % of employment distribution in the Philippines, 2020

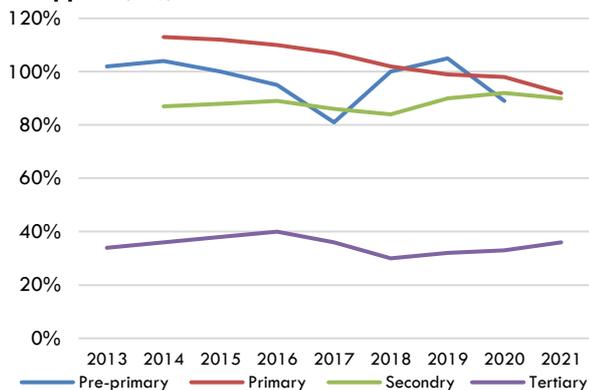
	Less than basic	Basic	Inter-mediate	Advanced
Total	1.1%	63%	6.1%	30%
Men	1.2%	69%	6.0%	24%
Women	1.1%	53%	6.3%	39%

Source: Philippines Statistics Authority, Statistical Tables on Labor Force Survey (LFS): October 2020.

Education reforms during the 2010s have demonstrated weak results in increasing school enrolment at all levels. Although the pre-primary education enrolment rate started well in 2013 due to the Kindergarten Education Act from 2012, Figure 12 shows that it entered a downturn but rebounded at the end of the 2010s. The Covid-19 pandemic brought a new slump in enrolment, though. Gross enrolment in primary education gradually fell during the 2010s, with a slight rise in the early 2020s. The gross enrolment rate at the secondary education level slightly improved at the end of the 2010s, peaking so far in 2020. Last but not least, enrolment in tertiary education rebounded at the end of the 2010s, supported by the Universal Access to Tertiary Education Act of 2017, increasing focus on internationalisation and grant-free tuition

across all state universities and colleges. The quality of higher education has been a perennial issue. For instance, a time of massification of higher education has led to a mismatch between graduate learning and the requirements of industry.⁷¹

Figure 12: Gross enrolment in education at all levels in the Philippines, %, 2013-2021



Note: Gross enrolment is the ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the corresponding official school age. Gross enrolment could therefore be higher than 100%.

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Institute of Statistics, Philippines, June 2023.

As previously indicated, the Covid-19 pandemic brought abrupt and unforeseen consequences following the education plan. Students experienced distress and poor learning outcomes with the closure of schools and the adoption of remote learning. Policies adopted during Covid-19 assisted selected students with allowances and subsidies, investment in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, and budget for printing and delivering of modules.⁷²

Vocational Training

A broad legal framework covers the Philippines' Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system (see more in Appendix Table 17).

The Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) are the major agencies responsible for implementation of public TVET programmes, in consultation with relevant stakeholders in the higher education and the

technical vocational education sector. Apart from the formal TVET system, TESDA, local government units (LGUs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) offer non-formal TVET programmes. These include education opportunities for out-of-school youths or adult illiterates who cannot afford formal education.

The National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan (NTESDP) 2018-2022 has ended, and NTESDP 2023-2028 is being developed. This is the TVET sector's roadmap for the next five years and it links with the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028. The NTESDP 2023-2028 is expected to focus on digitalisation in response to the Fourth Industrial Revolution and to pursue an area-based and demand-driven TVET.

While recent education reforms have boosted the growth of the TVET sector, lack of adequate resources has become a pressing concern; for instance, TESDA's endemic resource constraints and organisational capacity weigh on its ability to respond to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Six trade union representatives on the Board of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority play a key role in TVET policy formulation and implementation. Trade unions are also involved in policy implementation of skills development at enterprise level through Technical Training Institutes, which are set up from their initiative; in some cases, trade unions participate in labour-management committees. Although the Board of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, which operates with full-time technical support from government representatives and their respective agencies and employers, have their own HR departments, organised workers' representatives do not have the same level of support.⁷³

There has been a growth in TVET providers from 3,381 institutions in 2007 (2,520 private and 861 public institutions) to 3,966 in 2017 (3,625 private, 341 public). This shows that TVET providers (registered by TESDA) are becoming gradually more dominated by private institutions. Technical Vocational Institutions (TVIs) account for 75% of all

TVET providers, followed by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) at 16%. TESDA Training Institutions, or those public institutions supervised by the agency, only comprise 3% of the total, and 'others' 6%. The increase in private TVET providers could be attributed to the relatively low flow of government funding through TVET scholarship programmes implemented by both public and private institutions.⁷⁴

TVET enrollees were notably low at the beginning of the 2010s. Numbers started progressively to increase, reaching 2.3 million students in 2017, equalling a growth of 53% from 2010. Enrolment in community-based TVET has grown faster than other modalities, underscoring the importance of continued efforts to ensure high-quality training at local level. The ratio of TVET graduates to enrollees was estimated at 92% on average in 2014-2017 (see more details in Table 10). Over 5% of the Philippines' working-age population has completed some form of TVET programme, and TVET graduates are far more likely than average to participate in the labour market.⁷⁵

Table 10: The Philippines' vocational training status

Indicators	Value
Number of TVET enrollees (2017)	2,298,744
Ratio of TVET graduates to enrollees (2014-2017 average)	92%
Number of TVET trainers (2017)	4,168
Share of all students in secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes (2018)	9.7%
Share of all students in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes (2018)	38%

Sources: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority; UNESCO, Philippines: TVET Country Profile, 2019; The World Bank, Education Statistics.

Some of the main challenges in the Philippines TVET sector entail the rather low employability of graduates seeking specific occupations. Around 65% of Philippine graduates (job applicants seeking specific work positions) are not employable in their field of choice. The fast pace of technology development is challenging the future skills requirements and making many jobs obsolete through automation, digitalisation, and

robotization. The Philippines is also experiencing a 'brain drain' with a very high percentage of skilled Philippine workers seeking employment abroad.

Studies have revealed that people in the Philippines are more likely to have plans to emigrate when they receive vocational training. This situation links the training programmes to the domestic labour market; for example, if training does not lead to the right job or a higher income, it could increase incentives to withdraw from the domestic labour market and search for jobs abroad. It is also possible that people are participating in vocational training programmes to find employment abroad.⁷⁶

In the Philippines, TVET programmes suffered from Covid-19 impact because education strategies in this sector rely heavily on face-to-face learning using equipment and other experiential learning strategies. Programmes involve apprenticeship and actual involvement in industries that abruptly closed due to the pandemic. These learning strategies did not lend themselves easily to online interventions and, as such, are now affected by the school closures. Nevertheless, online courses were initially offered in 2020. They were discontinued, though, owing to weak access to the internet and digital devices.⁷⁷

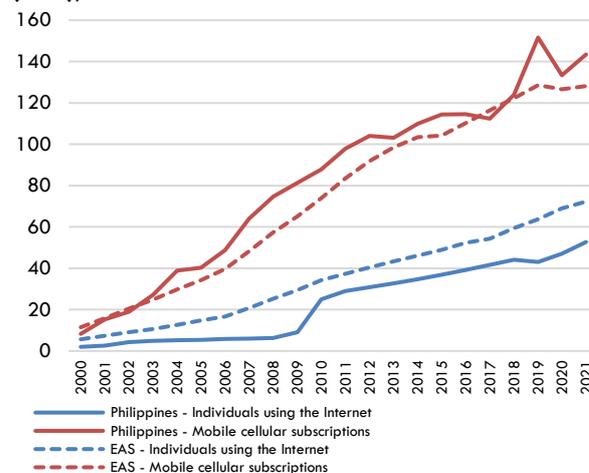
Other data show that the Philippines' firms offering formal training programmes rose significantly from 31% in 2009 to 60% of their permanent, full-time employees in 2015. This was considerably higher than ASEAN countries, e.g., Cambodia (22%), Indonesia (7.7%), Laos (24%), Malaysia (19%), Myanmar (5.9%), and Vietnam (22%).⁷⁸ Formal firms continue to be a small group compared to the widespread informal micro- and small enterprises. Despite efforts, enterprise-based training remains low and concentrated mainly in more industrialised regions. TESDA found industry support and commitment were not fully achieved, particularly industry involvement in labour market information, assessment, certification, and TVET financing. Introducing mobile laboratories, which aimed to increase training participation and give opportunities for productivity, was also not sufficiently met.⁷⁹

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is bringing disruption in the labour market: job losses due to digitisation are becoming more urgent, and upskilling and retooling are putting pressure on the TVET system. There is a high awareness of 4IR in the Philippines, and some innovative policies are already in place. Flexible learning programmes such as TESDA’s online programme play a critical role in retooling and upskilling displaced workers. The 4IR evolution has led to rapid employment growth in the Philippines information technology-business process outsourcing (IT-BPO) industry, and it may have a different impact in the coming years. BPO companies have become central employers for new graduates of many TVET courses and, recently, even undergraduates who can pass accredited pre-employment training courses. Around one million employees engaged in BPO services, which enjoy status as ecozones, benefit from incentives and tax breaks.⁸⁰ It is also worth mentioning that the BPO sector has been haunted by weak unionism due to insufficient design of services addressing this group’s needs.

Among Filipino students, employment in information and communication technology (ICT) services has become a top choice for both males and females. Although the evolution of ICT services, studies have found that as many as 49% of jobs in the Philippines, including over 80% of workers in the BPO and electronic manufacturing sector, were at high risk of being substituted by technology developments.⁸¹

Generally, the country has experienced a growing number of users of these services during the last two decades: individuals using the internet increased from 2.0% in 2000 to 53% of the population in 2021, which is lower compared to East Asia & Pacific average. Filipinos’ demands for mobile cellular subscriptions also soared from 8 per 100 people in 2000 to 143 per 100 in 2021, relatively high compared to the EAP average (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Individuals using the Internet (% of population) and mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people) in the Philippines and East Asia & Pacific (EAC), 2000-2021



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Philippines social protection system is structured by policies and programmes, supported by a legal framework based on separate sector-specific and programme-specific laws. The country has ratified three of fifteen ILO social security conventions (C118, C157, and C176 – see Appendix Table 14).

Poverty reduction and rural development strategies often include social protection as an essential pillar.⁸² This system is based on four main components: i) labour market interventions, ii) social insurance, iii) social welfare, and iv) social safety nets and others. Despite implementation of a wide range of programmes, several continue to be challenged by low penetration rates and leakage issues (programmes benefit the non-poor group).⁸³

Although the poverty rate fell during the 2010s, the population covered by at least one social protection fell from 47% in 2016 to 37% in 2020. This trend was similar in South-Eastern Asia. It is also worrisome to detect that the proportion of older Filipino persons receiving a pension dropped from 40% in 2016 to 21% in 2020, caught by universal social pension for senior citizens and retirees is not covered by the central social insurance schemes. It is worth mentioning that many retirees complain that their pensions are not even enough to cover their

maintenance drugs. Studies even found that the Philippines has one of the worst pension systems for retirees compared to the rest of the world.⁸⁴

On the other hand, poor persons covered by social protection systems reached 100% in 2018, and vulnerable persons covered by social assistance increased from 7.8% to 22% from 2016 to 2020. See more proportions of the population covered by social protection in other aspects in Appendix Table 20.

Other data reveal that the coverage of social protection and labour programmes reached 41% of the population, superseded by Indonesia (57%), Malaysia (77%), and Thailand (78%) but hovering above several other ASEAN countries. The Philippines coverage of social safety net programmes achieved 34%, well-targeted for the poorest quintile population. On the other hand, the social insurance programmes mainly reach the wealthiest quintile rather than the poorest quintile at 18% and 3.3% of the population, respectively.

There is a continuing issue of financial sustainability because contributions and benefits are not strongly linked with central insurance institutions. For example, the Armed Forces Personnel Pension is taken from the yearly national budget because they did not have a fund from their own contributions; a looming financial problem of funding is mounting. In 2023, a proposal that military and uniformed personnel contribute 5% of their monthly pay to their retirement funds is as part of a plan to overhaul a pension system. Other social programmes are also delivering doubtful returns.⁸⁵

The main bulk of workers operating in the informal economy is often side-lined for the legal access to the social protection schemes. For example, the income of most informal economy workers is not enough to pay for the premiums of social safety net providers with a coverage of around six to seven million contributors.⁸⁶ Around 40.5 million are SSS members as of May 2021; about 8.3% (3.4 million) are self-employed, while 13% (5.1 million) are voluntary members. Many informal workers lack awareness or incentives of these schemes. These

factors expose the challenges to reaching the SDG social protection goal by 2030, achieving substantial coverage of people with low incomes and the vulnerable (see Appendix Table 12, Indicator 1.3.1).

The main social insurance scheme for public civil servants is managed by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS). Workers from the private sector are joined via the Social Security System (SSS). Together with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), they manage the major social insurance schemes in the country. Social security system boards, including the Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, do not include representatives from trade unions. Nevertheless, public sector trade unions have welcomed a recent announcement from the government that recently approved social protection floors (SPFs) will cover precarious public services workers, including community health workers, known as Barangay Health Workers (BHWs).

PhilHealth coverage only included members based on premium payments until the Republic Act No. 11223 of 2019, also known as the Universal Health Care Act. This new act mandates the institutionalisation of health technology assessment (HTA) as a fair and transparent priority-setting mechanism. It has been recommended that the Department of Health and PhilHealth develop policies, programmes, and regulation, and determine a range of entitlements such as drugs, medicines, pharmaceutical products, other devices, procedures, and services. All Filipinos are automatically included under the National Health Insurance Programme (NHIP), making PhilHealth entitlement accessible to all Filipinos.

The country scores lower than the East Asia and Pacific average concerning current health expenditure per capita (see Table 11). Out-of-pocket health expenditure is falling and universal health services on the rise, linked to some health improvements; for example, drops in the mortality rate for children under-5's and maternal mortality ratio. Approximately 88% of Filipinos had medical

coverage in 2021. It is worth mentioning that all senior citizens upon reaching the age of 60 years are automatically covered in the Universal Health Care Programme. Likewise, informal workers such as self-employed and free-lancers are open to join the PhilHealth as self-paying members.

Table 11: Status of central health indicators in the Philippines and East Asia & Pacific (EAP), 2020/2021

Service	Philippines	EAP
Total health expenditure, % of GDP	5.5%	6.9%
Current health expenditure per capita	US\$194	US\$790
Universal Health Service coverage index * (2019)	55	-
Social health insurance coverage	0.0% *	-

* Coverage index for essential health services (based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access). It is presented on a scale of 0 to 100.

** Per cent of revenue.

Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

The Expanded Maternity Leave Law of 2019 covers women workers in the public and private sectors. It entitles them to 105 days of maternity leave, paid at 100% of their average daily salary. The law even provides an additional 15 days of paid leave if the female worker qualifies as a solo parent under the Solo Parent Welfare Act of 2000, with an option to extend for an additional 30 days without pay. Although the law has benefited formal female workers, those in the informal economy do not enjoy the benefits since they are not members of the SSS. A new bill of 2023 is in progress to provide a broader maternity cash benefit. Data show that mothers with new-borns who receive maternity benefits still have a low coverage of 12% in 2020 (see Appendix Table 20). The Philippine Labour Code does not include paternity benefits. Instead, the Paternity Leave Act of 1996 sets the frame: Men in private and government employees are entitled to seven days of paternity leave with full pay. They receive their basic salary, allowances, and other monetary benefits for those days. Paternity benefits differ from PhilHealth and

SSS maternity benefits; these two government agencies do not provide benefits specifically for expectant fathers.

No unemployment protection programme is anchored in national Philippines legislation (see Appendix Table 20). Only unemployment insurance schemes are available to workers enrolled in existing unemployment insurance schemes. The GSIS offers a programme for public sector employees. Unemployment benefit is paid when a permanent government employee who paid the required 12 months of integrated contributions is involuntarily separated from the service because of the abolition of office or position, usually resulting from reorganisation. The benefit is in cash payments equivalent to 50% of the average monthly compensation (AMC). The benefit duration depends on the length of service and ranges from two months to a maximum of six months. The SSS also offers unemployment insurance or involuntary separation benefits. There are cash benefits granted to covered employees, including domestics (*kasambahays*) and OFWs (sea-based and land-based) who are involuntarily separated from employment (e.g., due to retrenchment or downsizing, closure or cessation of operation, installation of labour-saving devices, redundancy). Members must have paid at least 36 monthly contributions. Data were scarce on the coverage of the insurance schemes.

The SSS has instituted programmes for domestic workers to handle and streamline the registration process for household employers and domestic workers. A survey by the Department of Labour and Employment and the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that, as of October 2019, or six years after the enactment of the Domestic Workers Act (RA 10361) of 2013, some 83% of the 1.4 million household workers still did not enjoy any social security benefit.⁸⁷

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA

Table 12: Status of key Sustainable Development Goals in labour market related issues in the Philippines

Indicators	Value	Year	SDG Targets
1.1.1: Working poverty rate (percentage of employed living below US\$1.9 PPP).	2.9%	2019	By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than US\$1.9 a day.
1.3.1: The population effectively covered by a social protection system, including social protection floors.	37% *	2020	Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.
5.5.2: Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions	35%	2020	Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.
5.5.2: Proportion of women in managerial positions	53%	2020	
8.2.1: Annual growth rate of output per worker (GDP constant 2011 international \$ in PPP).	4.3%	2010s, average	Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.
8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment.	-	-	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, through access to financial services.
8.3.1: Women	-	-	
8.3.1: Men	-	-	
8.5.1: Average hourly earnings of women and men employees.	-	-	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
8.5.2: Unemployment rate (Total, 15+)	2.5%	2020	
8.5.2: Women, 15+	2.7%	2020	
8.5.2: Women, 15-24 years	8.5%	2020	
8.5.2: Men, 15+	2.4%	2020	
8.5.2: Men, 15-24 years	6.1%	2020	
8.6.1: Proportion of youth (15-24 years) not in education, employment, or training).	19%	2020	By 2030, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.
8.7.1: Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in economic activity (Total).	-	-	Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025, end child labour in all its forms.
8.7.1: Girls	-	-	
8.7.1: Boys	-	-	
8.1.1: Non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers	417	2017	Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.
8.8.1: Fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers.	9.6	2017	
8.8.2: Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining)	4.37 **	2018	The exact measurement method and scoring for this indicator needs to be developed.
9.2.2: Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment.	8.1%	2020	Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries.
10.4.1: Labour income share as a percent of GDP.	27%	2017	Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.

* Population covered by at least one social protection benefit (see more in Appendix Table 20). ** Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on ILO textual sources and national legislation (see more in the Ratified ILO Conventions section).

Source: ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM); ILO, World Social Protection Report 2017-2019.

Table 13: List of approved labour related legislation in the Philippines, 2014-2022

Year / Theme	Law/decree
2014	
Employment policy, promotion of employment and employment services	Go Negosyo Act, 2014 (R.A. No. 10644).
Education, vocational guidance and training	Ladderized Education Act, 2014 (R.A. No. 10647).
Occupational safety and health	Guidelines for the Implementation of Globally Harmonized System (GHS) in Chemical Safety Program in the Workplace (D.O. No. 136-14).
2015	
General provisions	An Act repealing the Crime of Premature Marriage Under Article 351 of the Revised Penal Code (R.A. No. 10655).
Elimination of child labour, protection of children and young persons	Youth Entrepreneurship Act (R.A. No. 10679).
Employment policy, promotion of employment and employment services	An Act Defining the Role of the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE), The Local Government Units (LGUs), and accredited Nongovernment Organizations (NGOs) in the Establishment and Operation of the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), and the Operation of Job Placement Offices in Educational Institutions (EIs), amending for the purpose Sections 3, 5,6, 7 and 9 of Republic Act No. 8759, otherwise known as the "Public Employment Service Office Act, 1999".
Fishers	Republic Act No. 10654 amending R.A. No. 8550 otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998.
Seafarers	Seafarers Protection Act, 2016 [R.A. No. 10706].
International agreements	Convention de sécurité sociale entre le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg et la République des Philippines, signée à Luxembourg, le 15 mai 2015.
2016	
Freedom of association, collective bargaining and industrial relations	Department Order No. 151-16 Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No. 10396, or "An Act Strengthening Conciliation-Mediation as a Voluntary Mode of Dispute Settlement for All Labour Cases"
Employment policy, promotion of employment and employment services	Department Order No. 157-16 Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 8759, otherwise known as the PESO Act of 1999, as amended by RA No. 10691
Conditions of employment	Labour Advisory No. 10-2016 Prohibition against Labour-Only Contracting.
Occupational safety and health	Department Order No. 154-2016 Safety and Health Standards on the Use and Management of Asbestos in the Workplace.
	Labour Advisory No. 03-16 Safety and Health Measures to Prevent and Control Heat Stress at the Workplace.
Migrant workers	Department Order No. 159-16 Guidelines for the Employment of Migratory Sugarcane Workers (MSWs)
Seafarers	Department Order No. 153-16 Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No. 10706 otherwise known as the "Seafarers Protection Act"
Fishers	Department Order No. 156-16 Rules and Regulations governing the Working and Living Conditions of Fishers on board Fishing Vessels engaged in Commercial Fishing Operation.
	Department Order No. 156-16 Rules and Regulations governing the Working and Living Conditions of Fishers on board Fishing Vessels engaged in Commercial Fishing Operation.
Specific categories of workers	Department Order No. 159-16 Guidelines for the Employment of Migratory Sugarcane Workers (MSWs)
Elimination of child labour, protection of children and young persons	Department Order No. 149 of 2016 on the Guidelines on Assessing and Determining Hazardous Work in the Employment of Persons Below the Age of 18 Years.
Equality of opportunity and treatment	Anti-Age Discrimination in Employment Act (R.A. No. 10911, July 21, 2016).
2017	
Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and industrial relations	Labour Advisory No. 02-17 Right to Self-Organization Relative to the Implementation of K-12 Program.

Elimination of child labour, protection of children and young persons	Department Order No. 149-A of 2017 amending the Guidelines on Assessing and Determining Hazardous Work in the Employment of Persons Below the Age of 18 Years.
General provisions	Green Jobs Act of 2016 (RA 10771), 29 April 2016
2018	
General provisions	Philippine HIV and AIDS Policy Act, 2018 (RA No. 11166 of 2018) HIV Prevention and Control Costed Operational Plan 2018-2020.
Occupational safety and health	Department Order No. 198 of 2018 Implementing the rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 111058 entitled An Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Standards and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof.
2019	
Maternity protection	Expanded Maternity Leave Law.
Occupational safety and health	Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards Act.
General provisions	Safe Spaces Act. Telecommuting Act.
2020	
General provisions	Republic Act 11479 of 2020 (or the Anti-Terrorism Act)
Equality of opportunity and treatment	Asia Region Operational Plan, ROP 2020.
2021	
Education, vocational guidance and training	Republic Act No. 11551 - An Act Integrating Labour Education in The Tertiary Education Curriculum. -
Migrant workers	Republic Act No. 11641 - An Act Creating the Department of Migrant Workers, Defining its Powers and Functions, Rationalizing the Organization and Functions of Government Agencies Related to Overseas Employment and Labour Migration, appropriating funds therefor, and for other purposes.
2022	
-	-

Source: International Labour Organization, NATLEX, Philippines; DTDA SRO-Asia, Philippines: Data-collection tool, 2019/2020/2021.

Table 14: Ratified ILO Conventions in the Philippines, June 2023

Subject and/or right	Convention	Ratification date
Fundamental Conventions		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948	1953
	C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1953
Elimination of all forms of forced labour	C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930	2005
	C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1960
Effective abolition of child labour	C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973	1998
	C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2000
Elimination of discrimination in employment	C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1953
	C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1960
Occupational safety and health	C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981	Not ratified
	C187 - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006	2019
Governance Conventions		
Labour inspection	C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	Not ratified
	C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969	Not ratified
Employment policy	C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964	1976
Tripartism	C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	1991
Technical Conventions (Up-to-date)		
Children and young persons	C077 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946	1960
Wages	C094 - Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949	1953
	C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	1953
Migrant Workers	C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949	2009
	C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975	2006
Specific categories of workers	C110 - Plantations Convention, 1958	1968
	C149 - Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977	1979
	C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011	2012
Social Security	C118 - Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962	1994
	C157 - Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982	1994
	C165 - Social Security (Seafarers) Convention (Revised), 1987 *	2004
Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and industrial relations	C141 - Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975	1979
	C151 - Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978	2017
Employment policy and promotion	C159 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983	1991
Occupational safety and health	C176 - Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995	1998
Seafarers	C185 - Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 **	2012
	MLC - Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 ***	2012

* Automatic Denunciation on 20 Aug 2013 by convention MLC, 2006.

** Amendments of 2016 to the Annexes of the Convention No. 185.

*** Amendments of 2014, 2016 and 2018 to the MLC, 2006 are in force; the latter was ratified in December 2020.

Source: International Labour Organization, NORMLEX, Philippines, June 2023.

Table 15: Reported members of existing labour organisations, workers' associations, and Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) in the Philippines, 2017-2023

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 *	Growth, 2017-2019	Growth, 2020-2022
Labour organisations	5,027,874	4,689,058	4,739,994	4,777,988	4,801,080	4,973,653	5,250,042	-5.7%	4.1%
Public sector	450,686	469,020	490,696	495,678	500,670	513,266	548,591	8.9%	3.5%
National Government Agencies	277,775	278,966	286,002	284,903	285,288	286,325	306,880	3.0%	0.5%
Local Government Units	88,520	98,797	112,121	115,871	119,427	129,232	133,935	26.7%	11.5%
State Universities & Colleges	40,407	42,085	43,208	44,196	45,153	46,621	46,786	6.9%	5.5%
Government Owned & Controlled Corporations	43,984	49,172	49,365	50,708	50,802	51,088	60,990	12.2%	0.7%
Private sector - Enterprise Based Unions	1,543,514	1,543,185	1,566,173	1,596,576	1,614,554	1,626,337	1,650,912	1.5%	1.9%
Affiliates	160,281	160,366	160,484	161,584	162,956	166,251	166,791	0.1%	2.9%
Chartered locals	596,591	592,358	608,673	625,933	637,426	644,105	661,183	2.0%	2.9%
Independent unions	786,642	790,461	797,016	809,059	814,172	815,981	822,938	1.3%	0.9%
Workers Association	3,033,674	2,676,853	2,683,125	2,685,734	2,685,856	2,834,050	3,050,539	-12%	5.5%
Operating in one region	2,910,787	2,548,638	2,548,845	2,551,438	2,551,416	2,699,473	2,915,885	-12%	5.8%
Operating in more than one region	122,887	128,215	134,280	134,296	134,440	134,577	134,654	9.3%	0.2%
Existing CBAs	220,905	186,892	203,229	182,030	189,980	240,460	274,594	-8.0%	32%
Independent Unions	102,750	94,231	88,135	85,575	95,878	98,437	113,048	-14%	15%
Federated Unions	118,155	92,661	115,094	96,455	94,102	142,023	161,546	-2.6%	47%

* As of 1st Quarter 2023

Source: Philippines Bureau of Labour Relations, Statistical Reports.

Table 16: Ease of Doing Business in the Philippines, 2020

Topics	Value
Overall	95
Starting a Business	171
Dealing with Construction Permits	85
Getting Electricity	32
Registering Property	120
Getting Credit	132
Protecting Minority Investors	72
Paying Taxes	95
Trading Across Borders	113
Enforcing Contracts	152
Resolving Insolvency	65

Note: Doing Business 2020 indicators are ranking from 1 (top) to 190 (bottom) among countries.

Source: World Bank, Ease of Doing Business 2020 in the Philippines.

Table 17: Central education laws/acts in the Philippines

Laws	Issues
Kindergarten Education Act of 2012.	This act makes kindergarten education the first stage of compulsory and mandatory formal education before Grade 1.
Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013.	This act provides at least one year of preschool and 12 years of basic education.
Anti-Bullying Act of 2013	This act encompasses all public and private basic-education schools and they are mandated to adopt anti-bullying policies and establish intervention programmes for both the child victim and the child bully.
Fast-Tracked Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 2013	This act promotes the hiring of teachers from among the graduates of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses and it enhances the current science and technology scholarships offered by the Department of Science and Technology;
Rural Farm Schools Act	This act aims to provide an alternative mode of secondary education in rural areas with the establishment of rural farm schools in the country (and these are to follow the general secondary education curriculum with additional courses focused on agri-fishery arts.
Iskolar ng Bayan Act of 2014	This act mandates all state universities and colleges to admit and provide scholarship grants to the top 10 public high-school graduates subject to some requirements and conditions provided by the law and the implementing rules and regulations to be formulated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the DepEd.
Palarong Pambansa Act of 2013	This act institutionalised the conduct of the Palarong Pambansa every year, making the event the “primary avenue for providing in-school sports opportunities to improve the physical, intellectual and social well-being of the youth.”
Labour Education Act of 2021	This act integrates labour education into the tertiary education curriculum. These changes make up one of the most ambitious and complex education sector reform processes undertaken in the country’s education system.
Technical and Vocational Education and Training	
Republic Act No. 11230 of 2019	An act instituting a Philippine labour force competencies and competitiveness programme and free access to technical-vocational education and training.
Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2016	This act has four components: free higher education, free TVET, tertiary-education subsidy and the student loan programme.
Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Act of 2015	This act unifies all modalities of publicly funded Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid and Student Loans for Tertiary Education. The UniFAST Act rationalises the allocation, utilization and client-targeting of government resources and improves access to quality higher and technical education for the beneficiaries.
Republic Act No. 10650 (“Open Distance Learning Act”) of 2014.	Expands and further democratizes access to quality tertiary education through the promotion and application of open learning as a philosophy of access to educational services.
Republic Act No. 10771 (Green Jobs Act) of 2016)	The Green Jobs Act promotes the creation of “green jobs” and employment that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment in the agriculture, industry, or services sectors. The act also mandates the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) to coordinate with other government agencies in formulating a National Green Jobs Human Resource Development Plan on the expansion, enhancement, and utilization of the labour force, both in the private and public sector.
Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013	This act provides senior high school students with specialised tracks such as the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL).
JobStart Philippines Act	This act promotes a programme of the Department of Labour and Employment which shortens youth’s school-to-work transition by enhancing job seekers’ knowledge and skills acquired in the formal education or technical training and enabling them to become more responsive to the demands of the labour market. With the participation of the private sector and other stakeholders, the programme will also help develop the life skills of youth,

	including those relevant to the values of professionalism and work appreciation, and provide trainees with a conducive and safe work environment or an avenue where they can apply relevant theories and code of ethics.
National TechVoc Day Act	This act is an advocacy campaign through lead agencies TESDA and DepEd, which aims to provide opportunities for all government entities to engage in activities in celebration of National TechVoc Day. Through this Act, relevance of technical-vocational education in the Philippine economy is better appreciated and supported.
Agri-Fishery Mechanization Act	This act firms up the policy of modernizing Philippine agriculture through agricultural mechanization. Industrialization for economic development is recommended as a strategy to support agricultural development. The act aims for increased production of farmers and fisherfolk while boosting the interest of the youth, undergraduates and graduates on agricultural engineering courses and technical vocational programmes in agricultural and fisheries mechanisation.
Sec. 24 of the Magna Carta for Women or the Right to Education and Training	The magna mandates the State to ensure the following: “(a) Women migrant workers have the opportunity to undergo skills training, if they so desire, before taking on a foreign job, and possible retraining upon return to the country; (b) Gender-sensitive training and seminars; and (c) Equal opportunities in scholarships based on merit and fitness especially to those interested in research and development aimed towards women-friendly farm technology.”

Source: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

Table 18: The Philippines key economic data, projections, 2019-2024

Values	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
GDP (current, billion, US\$)	377bn	362bn	394bn	404bn	441bn	476
GDP per capita (current, US\$)	3,512	3,326	3,576	3,623	3,905	4,166
Total investment (% of GDP)	26%	17%	21%	25%	25%	24%
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	26%	21%	20%	20%	22%	21%
General government expenditure (% of GDP)	22%	26%	27%	27%	26%	25%
General government gross debt (% of GDP)	37%	52%	57%	58%	57%	57%

Sources: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2023.

Table 19: Largest federations and their affiliated organisations, 2021

Federations	Members	Affiliates
Associated Labour Unions (ALU)	79,558	958
Federation of Filipino Workers (FFW)	35,073	477
Solidarity of Unions in the Philippines for Empowerment and Reforms (SUPER)	27,799	454
Lakas Manggagawa sa Pilipinas (LAKAS)	8,165	411
Philippine Trade and General Workers Organization (PTGWO)	93,720	358
National Workers Brotherhood (NWB)	9,766	350
Filipino Samahang Manggagawa (FSM)	10,362	326
National Federation of Labour (NAFLU)	31,098	314
Association of Democratic Labour Organization (ADLO)	10,733	288
United Filipino Seafarers (UFS)	4,739	279
Total	311,013	4,215

Note: Data are based on DoLE's official data; most federations do not update their membership rate, indicating that the information should be interpreted with reservations.

Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview 2021.

Table 20: Proportion of population covered by social protection systems and health in the Philippines, %, 2020

Indicator	Coverage
People covered by Health Social Protection, % of population	85%
Population covered by at least one social protection benefit	37%
Proportion of older persons receiving a pension ****	21%
Persons with severe disabilities collecting disability social protection benefits	3.3%
Unemployed receiving unemployment benefits	0%
Mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits	12% *
Employed covered in the event of work injury	28%
Children/households receiving child/family cash benefits	31%
Poor persons covered by social protection systems	100% **
Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance	22%
Coverage of social insurance programmes, % of population	8.9% ***

* Year: 2019.

** Year: 2018.

*** Year: 2015.

**** This figure may not include those receiving the non SSS and GSIS pensioners such as those receiving the Social Pension for Indigents. Also, it may not include the Military Retirees, those from the Judiciary and those from the Monetary Board who are all receiving hefty pensions despite not paying contributions for their retirement funds.

Source: International Labour Organisation, Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM); The World Bank, World Development Indicators; DTDA, data collection tool 2020: Philippines.

Table 21: The Nagkaisa labour coalition, August 2023

Nagkaisa
Alliance of Free Workers (AFW)
All Filipino Workers Confederation (AFWC)
Automobile Industry Workers Alliance (AIWA)
Alab Katipunan
Association of Genuine Labor Organizations (AGLO)
Associated Labor Unions (ALU)
Associated Labor Unions- Association of Professional Supervisory Officers Technical Employees Union (ALU-APSOTEU)
ALU-Metal
Associated Labor Unions-Philippine Seafarers'Union (ALU-PSU)
ALU-Textile
ALU-Transport
Associated Labor Unions-Visayas Mindanao Confederation of Trade Unions (ALU-VIMCOMTU)
Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL)
Association of Trade Unions (ATU)
Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP)
Confederation of Independent Unions (CIU)
Confederation of Labor and Allied Social Services (CLASS)
Construction Workers Solidarity (CWS), Federation of Coca-Cola Unions (FCCU)
Federation of Free Workers (FFW)
Kapisanan ng Maralitang Obrero (KAMAO)
Katipunan
Pambansang Kilusan ng Paggawa (KILUSAN)
Kapisanan ng mga Kawani sa Koreo sa Pilipinas (KKKP)
Labor education and Research Network (LEARN)
League of Independent Bank Organizations (LIBO)
Manggagawa para sa Kalayaan ng Bayan (MAKABAYAN)
MARINO
National Association of Broadcast Unions (NABU)
National Federation of Labor Unions (NAFLU)
National Mines and Allied Workers Union (NAMA WU)
National Association of Trade Unions (NATU)
National Confederation of Labor (NCL)
National Confederation of Transport Union (NCTU)
National Union of Portworkers in the Philippines (NUPP)
National Union of Workers in Hotel, Restaurant and Allied Industries (NUWHRAIN)
Philippine Airlines Employees Association (PALEA)
Pepsi Cola Employees Union of the Philippines (PEUP)
Philippine Government Employees Association (PGEA)
Pinag-isang Tinig at Lakas ng Anakpawis (PIGLAS)
Philippine Integrated Industries Labor Union (PILLU)
Philippine Independent Public Sector Employees Association (PIPSEA)
Partido Manggagawa (PM)
Philippine Metalworkers Alliance (PMA)
Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK)
Philippine Transport and General Workers Organization (PTGWO)
SALIGAN
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
Workers Solidarity Network (WSN)

Source: Nagkaisa, *About*.

Table 22: Legal reservations concerning the rights to organise, collective bargaining, and strikes, 2023

Right to organise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive representativeness or minimum number of members required for the establishment of a union. • Restrictions on trade unions' right to establish branches, federations, and confederations or to affiliate with national and international organisations. • Restrictions on the right to elect representatives and self-administer in full freedom. • Administrative authorities' power to unilaterally dissolve, suspend or de-register trade union organisations. • Several public servants, including prison guards, firefighters, and uniformed military personnel, do not have the right to form and join unions. • Non-nationals or migrants can only join unions if their home country permits migrants from the Philippines to join unions. • Managerial staff are not allowed to join unions. Supervisors may join their own organisations, but not general workers' unions. • Temporary workers do not have the right to join and form unions.
Right to collective bargaining
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive requirements in respect to trade unions' representativeness or minimum number of members required to bargaining collectively. • Restrictions on the duration, scope of application or coverage of collective agreements. • Government employees have a more restrictive bargaining law concerning Collective Negotiation Agreements (CNAs), which do not allow them to bargain on economic demands. • Only a union that has previously negotiated a collective agreement with the employer can strike.
Right to strike
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All avenues of conciliation must have been exhausted before a strike can be called. • Excessive civil or penal sanctions for workers and unions involved in non-authorized strike actions. • Strike by civil servants is not allowed. Strikes by government employees are channelled into mediation and arbitration procedures. It is worth mentioning that there had been experiences in the past where strikes and mass actions were held successfully.

Source: International Trade Union Confederation, *Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, The Philippines: Legal*, September 2023.

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