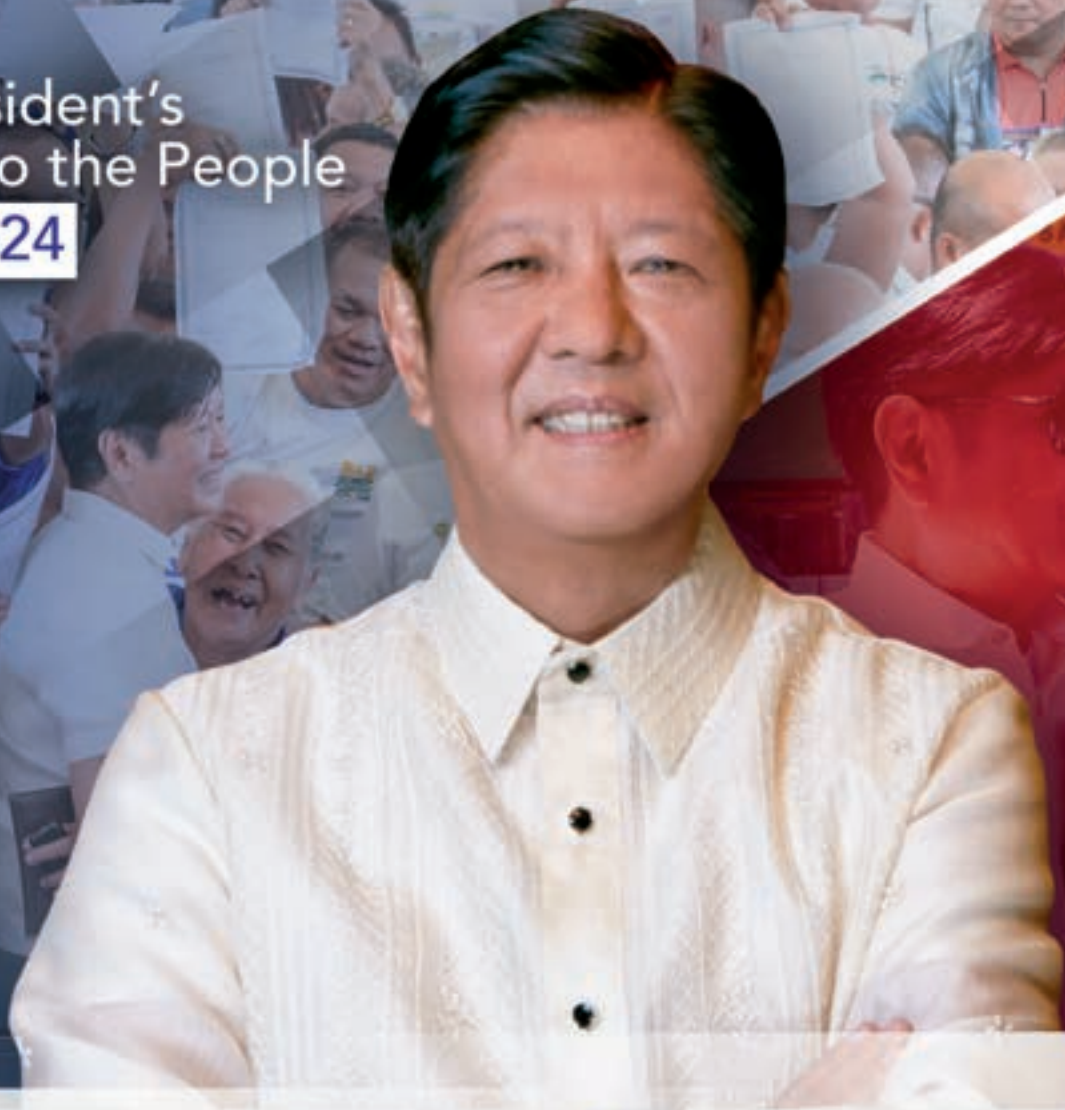


The President's  
Report to the People

2022-2024



*Bagong Pilipinas:*

BUILDING A NATION TOGETHER



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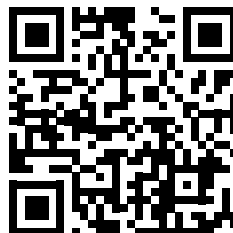
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# **The President's Report to the People 2022-2024**

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*Bagong Pilipinas:*  
Building a Nation Together

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# Preface

Last year, we embarked on our journey toward pursuing our ambitious vision of “*Bagong Pilipinas: One Nation, One People, Building a Better Future Together.*”

We presented the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 and the 8-Point Socioeconomic Agenda as our blueprints for our goals of economic and social transformation. We laid the groundwork to achieve these goals by defining policies, setting priorities, and adopting new systems.

Chartering the course toward the vision of a *Bagong Pilipinas*, this Administration prioritizes the general welfare of our people, recognizing the Filipinos as indispensable partners in this journey.

We adopted appropriate changes that are more sensitive to the Filipinos’ needs and made public service within reach.

This year, with the Government and the Filipino people working hand in hand, I am glad to report that we are well on our way toward a *Bagong Pilipinas*.

In just two years, our country was able to recover from the economic slump brought by the pandemic. Through the implementation of reforms to promote both foreign and local investments, we now see the revitalization of industries and along with it, the resurrection and creation of more jobs.

As an archipelagic country, we are ensuring connectivity through physical and cyber structures to bring knowledge, peace, and development to the farthest island of the nation. Infrastructure projects that were years, if not decades, in the making were completed. New ones will soon rise to address the needs of future generations.

This Administration invested heavily in agriculture with the goal of making it a meaningful and productive endeavor. We are doing this by focusing our resources in bridging infrastructure gaps in our supply chain, adopting modern technologies, and enhancing the sector’s resilience to climate change that would benefit our farmers and fisherfolk and ultimately provide an adequate supply of food to all Filipinos.

We are addressing hunger and poverty head on by investing in our people’s nutrition and providing them opportunities to break the intergenerational poverty cycle.

Acknowledging the importance of education and to catch up with learning losses, we immediately brought our children back to school and forged a medium-term guide to improve the country’s basic education landscape. In addition, we also built and repaired more classrooms, and we will build more. Further, we are bringing the internet and necessary tools to our learners and providing the needed support to our teachers.

We are reforming our bureaucracy into a government that is accountable to its people. We are working with our local chief executives to disperse resources and spread development across the country. At the same time, we are ensuring that the national government takes the lead in areas needing centralized planning and execution so as not to leave anyone behind.

This Administration is ushering a new dawn of development in Mindanao. In areas where there was once conflict, we now see the birth of tourism and entrepreneurship. Fragile as it is, we will continue keeping the flame of industry alive and stoking it to burn brighter for Mindanao's future.

Our commitment remains strong in bringing our people together, giving them an important and meaningful role in building our nation.

This Administration's call for unity rings loudly more so today. We cannot be fragmented in facing climate change or the forces that are trying to claim our seas. We need to be one in strengthening our bureaucracy, addressing the ails of our society, and forging a stronger economy. Only in unity can we, as Filipinos, move forward toward nation-building.

Before us is a golden opportunity to make *Bagong Pilipinas* we all dreamed of and deserve a reality. A nation of prosperity, security, and limitless opportunities for every Filipino.

Indeed, we have come a long way from the uncertain days of the past. We have toiled with hope and optimism, building a better future for our families and our country. We are building that nation, adding blocks to the very foundation our forefathers have set in place.

Brick by brick, bit by bit, we have forged a clear path toward lasting peace that has eluded us for more than half a century. We shall be relentless in building this nation together toward a *Bagong Pilipinas*.



**FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.**

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# List of Acronyms

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4G	4 <sup>th</sup> Generation
4PH	<i>Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino</i> Housing
4Ps	<i>Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino</i> Program
ACPC	Agricultural Credit Policy Council
ACR	All Case Rates
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AICS	Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIR-TIP	Anti-Illegal Recruitment and Trafficking-In-Persons
ALI	Agrarian Law Implementation
ALS	Alternative Learning System
ANAR	Airport-New Clark City Access Road
AO	Administrative Order
AP	Access Point
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APMCDRR	Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on DRR
ARB	Agrarian Reform Beneficiary
ARTA	Anti-Red Tape Authority
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASF	African Swine Fever
ATI	Agricultural Training Institute
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
AY	Academic Year
BADAC	Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BCDA	Bases Conversion and Development Authority
BCIB	Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge
BDP	Barangay Development Program
BEV	Battery Electric Vehicle
BFAR	Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
BFP	Bureau of Fire Protection
BI	Bureau of Immigration
BIDA	<i>Buhay Ingatan, Droga'y Ayawan</i>
BINHI	Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished
BIR	Bureau of Internal Revenue
BLA	Bilateral Labor Agreement
BLGC	Bangsamoro Local Government Code
BOC	Bureau of Customs
BOI	Board of Investments
BOL	Bangsamoro Organic Law
BOP	Balance of Payments
BP2	<i>Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa</i>
BPBRC	Bangsamoro Police Basic Recruit Course
BPI	Bureau of Plant Industry
BPSF	<i>Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo</i> Fair
BSKE	<i>Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan</i> Elections
BSP	<i>Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas</i>



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BTA	Bangsamoro Transition Authority
BUCAS	<i>Bagong</i> Urgent Care and Ambulatory Service
BuCor	Bureau of Corrections
CBA-CPLA	Cordillera Bodong Administration–Cordillera People’s Liberation Army
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCA	Clinical Care Associates
CCC	Climate Change Commission ( <i>as it appears in Chapter 4</i> ) Citizens’ Complaint Center ( <i>as it appears in Chapter 7</i> )
CDC	Child Development Center
CDD	Community-Driven Development
CDP	Cluster Development Plan
CDTI	Civil Defense and Disaster Management Training Institute
CFPP	Coal-fired Power Plant
CFT	Cash-for-Training
CFW	Cash-for-Work
CFWP	Cash-for-Work Program
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
CIS	Communal Irrigation System
ckm	circuit-kilometer
CLCS	Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
CME	Coco Methyl Ester
CNP	Cebu-Negros-Panay
COMELEC	Commission on Elections
COP28	28 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
CORD	Condonation Response and Action Desk
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CPP-NPA-NDF	Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army-National Democratic Front
CREATE	Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises
CREATE MORE	Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy
CRK	Clark International Airport
CS	common salt
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTG	Communist Terrorist Group
DA	Department of Agriculture
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform
DARAB	DAR Adjudication Board
DATS	Digital Agricultural Tools and Services
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DC	Decommissioned Combatants
DCCBR	Davao City Coastal Bypass Road
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd	Department of Education
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFP	Digital Farmers Program

# List of Acronyms

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DHSUD	Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DILP	DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program
DMW	Department of Migrant Workers
DND	Department of National Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOF	Department of Finance
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DOT	Department of Tourism
DOTr	Department of Transportation
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DRCC	Disaster Response Command Center
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DTTB	Doctors to the <i>Barrios</i>
eBOSS	Electronic Business One-Stop Shop
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfer
EC	Employees' Compensation
ECC	Employees' Compensation Commission
E-CLIP	Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program
ECS	Extended Continental Shelf
EDCOM II	Second Congressional Commission on Education
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
eFOI	Electronic Freedom of Information
e-gate	Electronic Gate
eGOV PH App	eGov PH Application
eLGU	Electronic Local Government Unit
EO	Executive Order
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
EOPT	Ease of Paying Taxes
EPAHP	Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
ERC	Energy Regulatory Commission
ESEOC	Energy Sector Emergency Operations Center
eSPARC	Electronic Simplified Processing of Application for Registration of Company
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicle
EVCS	EV Charging Station
e-Visa	Electronic Visa
F2C2	Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation
FALGU	Financial Assistance to Local Government Unit
FCA	Farmers Cooperative and Association
FDV	Fertilizer Discount Voucher
FMR	Farm-to-Market Road

---

FMRDP	FMR Development Program
FMRNP	FMR Network Plan
FOI	Freedom of Information
FPIAP	Free Public Internet Access Program
FRP	fiberglass reinforced plastic
FSP	Food Stamp Program
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTAA	Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement
FY	Fiscal Year
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GAMOT	Guaranteed and Accessible Medications for Outpatient Treatment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Growth Equity Fund
GEMP	Government Energy Management Program
GEPP	Green Economy Programme for the Philippines
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIDA	Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Area
GIR	Gross International Reserves
GOCC	Government-owned or -controlled corporation
GPI	Global Peace Index
GPRA	Government Procurement Reform Act
GSIS	Government Service Insurance System
GW	gigawatt
ha	hectare
HCPN	Health Care Provider Network
HCW	healthcare worker
HEA	Health Emergency Allowance
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEV	Hybrid Electric Vehicle
HFEP	Health Facilities Enhancement Program
HH	household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRH	Human Resources for Health
HS8PAA	Health Sector 8-Point Action Agenda
IA	Irrigators Association
IACAT	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
IACAT-TIP	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking- <i>Tahanan ng Inyong Pag-asa</i>
IBC-13	Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation-13
ICIC	International Conference of Information Commissioners
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IFP	Infrastructure Flagship Project
IGRB	Intergovernmental Relations Body
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMC	Interventions Monitoring Cards
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INDOPACOM	Indo-Pacific Command
InFRA	Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation
INSPIRE	Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion

# List of Acronyms

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IPA	Investment Promotion Agency
IPBF	Indo-Pacific Business Forum
IPEF	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity
IRR	Implementing Rules and Regulations
ISF	Informal Settler Families
ISO	Internal Security Operations
ITA	Internet Transactions Act
IWMP	Integrated Water Resources Master Plan
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
JAO	Joint Administrative Order
JCG	Japan Coast Guard
JCM	Joint Commission Meeting
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JRMP II	Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project Phase II
KALAHI-CIDSS	<i>Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan</i> -Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services
KALASAG	<i>Gawad KAlamidad at Sakuna LABanan, SARiling Galing ang Kaligtasan</i>
KALINISAN	<i>Kalinga at Inisyatiba para sa Malinis na Bayan sa Bagong Pilipinas</i>
kg	kilogram
KIG	Kalayaan Island Group
km	kilometer
Konsulta	<i>Konsultasyong Sulit at Tama</i>
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
kV	kilovolt
kWh	kilowatt-hour
L1CE	LRT-1 Cavite Extension
LAB for ALL	<i>Libreng Laboratoryo, Konsulta, at Gamot Para sa Lahat</i>
LAD	Land Acquisition and Distribution
LAWA	Local Adaptation to Water Access
LBI	Luzon Bypass Infrastructure
LBP	Land Bank of the Philippines
LDF	Loss and Damage Fund
LEC	Luzon Economic Corridor
LEP	Labor and Employment Plan
LGU	Local Government Unit
LMS	Last Mile School
LPA	low-pressure area
LRT-1	Light Rail Transit Line 1
LRV	Light Rail Vehicle
LSA	Learning Site for Agriculture
LSEN	Luzon Spine Expressway Network
LTG	Local Terrorist Group
LTO	Land Transportation Office
LWOB	Lease with Option to Buy
m	meter
MAIFIP	Medical Assistance to Indigent and Financially Incapacitated Patients
MAP-MH	Medicines Access Program for Mental Health
MARINA	Maritime Industry Authority
MC	Memorandum Circular

---

MCA	Maritime Cooperative Activity
MCB	Marawi Compensation Board
MCC	Mabalacat City College
MCPO	Manila Central Post Office
MES	Mobile Energy System
MIC	Maharlika Investment Corporation
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions
MIF	Maharlika Investment Fund
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MLD	million liters per day
mm	millimeters
MMDA	Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
MMLIP	Metro Manila Logistics Improvement Program
MMMHMC	Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center
MMSP	Metro Manila Subway Project
MMT	million metric tons
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MNS	Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRA	Mutual Recognition Arrangements
MRT-7	Metro Rail Transit Line 7
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MSRS	Medical Scholarship and Return Service
MT	metric ton
MTFF	Medium-Term Fiscal Framework
MVIP	Mindanao-Visayas Interconnection Project
MW	megawatt
MWSS	Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
NAC	National Amnesty Commission
NAEA	New Agrarian Emancipation Act
NAIA	Ninoy Aquino International Airport
NAP	National Adaptation Plan ( <i>as it appears in Chapter 4</i> ) National Action Plan ( <i>as it appears in Chapter 7</i> )
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NC	National Certificate
NCC	New Clark City
NCR	National Capital Region
NCSP	National Cybersecurity Plan
NCTI	National Cyber Training Institute
NDCIP	Implementation Plan of the Nationally Determined Contribution
NDRRMF	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NFA	National Food Authority
NFB	National Fiber Backbone
NGA	National Government Agency
NGCP	National Grid Corporation of the Philippines

# List of Acronyms

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NGP	National Greening Program
NHA	National Housing Authority
NHIP	National Health Insurance Program
NHMFC	National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation
NHWSS	National Health Workforce Support System
NIA	National Irrigation Administration
NIPAS	National Integrated Protected Areas System
NIS	National Irrigation System
NLE	National and Local Elections
NLEX	North Luzon Expressway
NMIA	New Manila International Airport
NPC	National Power Corporation
NPGA	Non-Project Grant Aid
NPL	Non-Performing Loan
NSCR	North-South Commuter Railway
NTF-ELCAC	National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict
OBS	Open Budget Survey
OCD	Office of Civil Defense
OES	Office of the Executive Secretary
OFs	Overseas Filipinos
OFWs	Overseas Filipino Workers
OGPI	Oceana Gold Philippines Inc.
OPAPRU	Office of the Presidential Adviser for Peace, Reconciliation and Unity
ORCC	One Repatriation Command Center
OSAEC	Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
OSS	One-Stop Shop
OSW	Offshore Wind
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
P3	<i>Pondo Para sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso</i>
PAAP-TB	Philippine Acceleration Action Plan for TB
PAFFF	Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolk, and Families
PAO	Public Attorney's Office
PAP	Programs, Activities, and Projects
PCEO	President and Chief Executive Officer
PCF	Primary Care Facilities
PCG	Philippine Coast Guard
PCO	Presidential Communications Office
PCPN	Primary Care Provider Network
PDEA	Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency
PDL	Person Deprived of Liberty
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PFMCP	Public Financial Management Competency Program
PHC	Primary Health Care
PhilHealth	Philippine Health Insurance Corporation
PhilRice	Philippine Rice Research Institute
PhilSA	Philippine Space Agency
PhilSys	Philippine Identification System
PH-OGP	Philippine-Open Government Partnership

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PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PNP	Philippine National Police
PPA	Philippine Ports Authority
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PQF	Philippine Qualifications Framework
PrEP	pre-exposure prophylaxis
PRiSM	Philippine Rice Information System
PSF	People's Survival Fund
PSSP	Pre-Service Scholarship Program
PTB	Passenger Terminal Building
PTFoMS	Presidential Task Force on Media Security
PTIM	Presidential Trade and Investment Mission
PUV	Public Utility Vehicle
PWD	Person with Disability
PWUD	Person Who Use Drugs
RA	Republic Act
RAP	Register Anywhere Program
RCEF	Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund
RCOA	Retail Competition and Open Access
RE	Renewable Energy
RFFA	Rice Farmers Financial Assistance
RFP	Regional Fish Port
rHIVda	Rapid HIV Diagnostic Algorithm
ROK	Republic of Korea
RORE	Rotation and Resupply
RPM-P/RPA/ABB	<i>Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas</i> /Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade
RPSB	Revitalized <i>Pulis sa Barangay</i>
RPVARA	Real Property Valuation and Assessment Reform Act
RPWUD	Recovering Person Who Use Drug
RSBSA	Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture
RTWPB	Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board
RWCS	Rain Water Collector System
SAFPB	Support and Assistance Fund to Participatory Budgeting
SAFDZ	Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zone
SBFP	School-Based Feeding Program
SCHRC	Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination
SCS	South China Sea
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SeaRDeC	Seaweed Research and Development Center
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SEC ZERO	Securities and Exchange Commission Zuper Easy Registration Online
SFP	Supplementary Feeding Program
SGLG	Seal of Good Local Governance
SGLGIF	Seal of Good Local Governance Incentive Fund
SHA	Special Hardship Allowance
SHC	Super Health Center
SHFC	Social Housing Finance Corporation
SHS	Senior High School

# List of Acronyms

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SIDA	Sugarcane Industry Development Act
SLEX	South Luzon Expressway
SLP	Sustainable Livelihood Program
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SPLIT	Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling
SSIP	Small-Scale Irrigation Project
SSS	Social Security System
STCW	Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping
SUC	State Universities and Colleges
SWDI	Social Welfare Development Indicator
SY	School Year
t	ton
TB	Tuberculosis
TDP	<i>Tulong Dunong</i> Program
Tech4ED	Technology for Education, Employment, Entrepreneurs, and Economic Development
TES	Tertiary Education Subsidy
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TRB	Toll Regulatory Board
TUPAD	<i>Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating</i> Displaced/Disadvantaged Workers
TVET	Technical-Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAQTEA	Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act
UHC	Universal Health Care
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States
VAT	Value-added tax
VIP	Verde Island Passage
WEHLO	Localized Weather, Environment, and Hydromet Monitoring System
WESM	Wholesale Electricity Spot Market
WPS	West Philippine Sea
WRMO	Water Resources Management Office
WTP	Water Treatment Plant
YDW	Youth Development Worker



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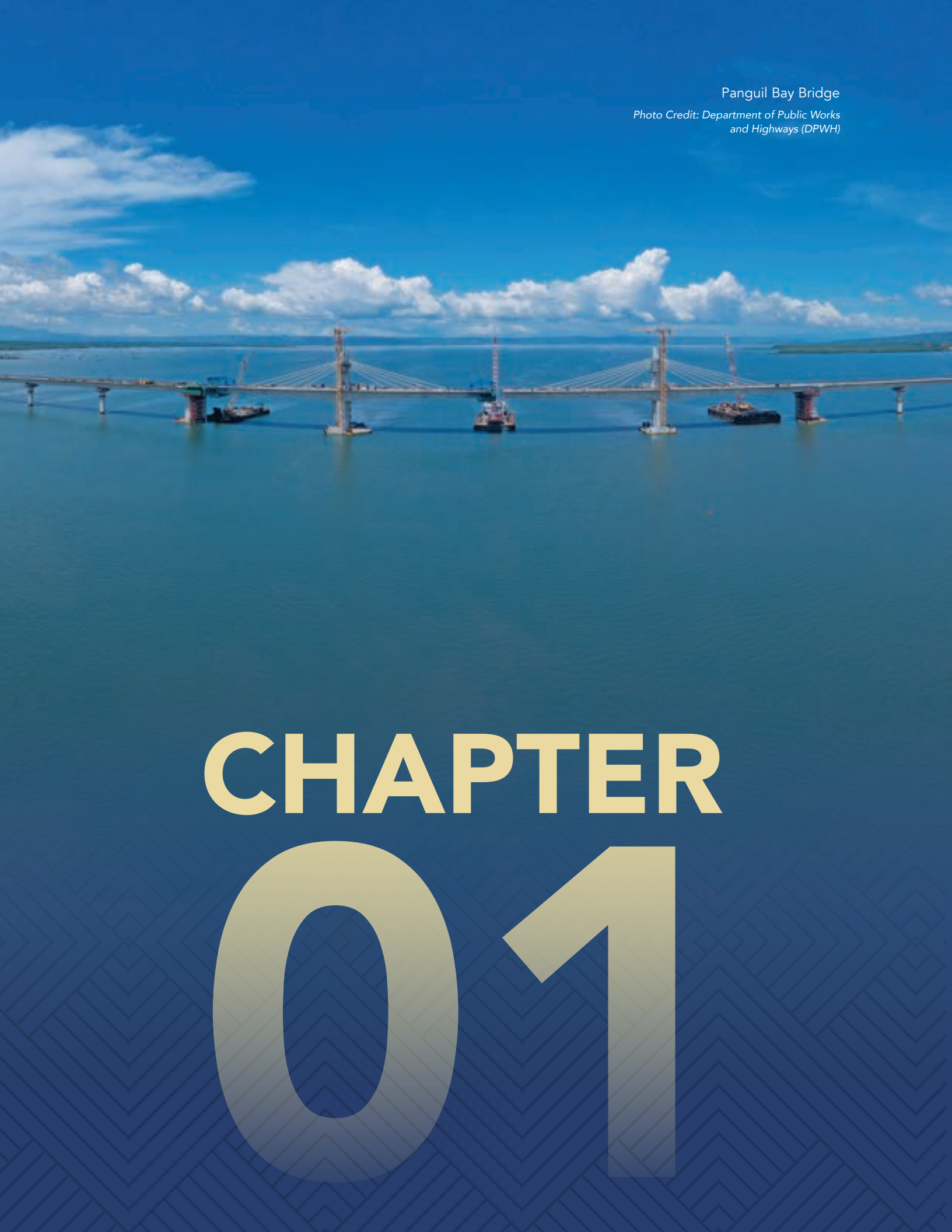




***Bagong Pilipinas:***  
Building a Nation Together

Panguil Bay Bridge

*Photo Credit: Department of Public Works  
and Highways (DPWH)*



# CHAPTER 01



# Advancing Economic Transformation and Growth

A strong nation is built upon a robust economy that provides opportunities where people from all walks of life, such as farmers and fisherfolk, workers, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and investors can make productive use of the nation's resources to build, create, and innovate.

It rests upon modern infrastructure that connects people, markets, and bureaucracies; facilitates the development of the countryside; and promotes a secure and sustainable future for all.

The Philippine economy would not be where it is today without the help of our partners from the private sector, the academe, and international organizations. Our collaborators are critical in achieving our vision of bridging the digitalization gap and building a better-connected Philippines.

By the end of this Administration, we hope to deliver an economy that is inclusive and sustainable—one that works for the betterment of every Filipino and the future generations.



The President welcomes investors at the Malacañan Palace on February 26, 2024.

Photo Credit: Presidential Communications Office (PCO)



*With the efforts we have made towards maintaining a sound macroeconomic profile, providing business-enabling policies, and investing in big-ticket infrastructure projects, I hope we are sending the clear message that the Philippines is open for business and that the Philippines means business.”*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
Philippine Business Opportunities Forum  
February 10, 2023

# Building on a Strong Economic and Fiscal Foundation

The early approval of the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework (MTFF) and the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 helped set our objectives, defined our priorities, and provided concrete strategies to guide government agencies in pursuing a collaborative, holistic, and focused approach to achieving economic and social transformation.

In light of domestic and global developments, the Development Budget Coordination Committee has recalibrated the government's medium-term macroeconomic assumptions, fiscal program, and growth targets for fiscal years (FYs) 2024 to 2028.

The adjustment of our goals ensures that the government responds more precisely to the needs of the Filipino people and that strategic growth-enhancing fiscal consolidation is being pursued for sustainable and inclusive development.<sup>1</sup>

## Strengthened Macroeconomic Fundamentals

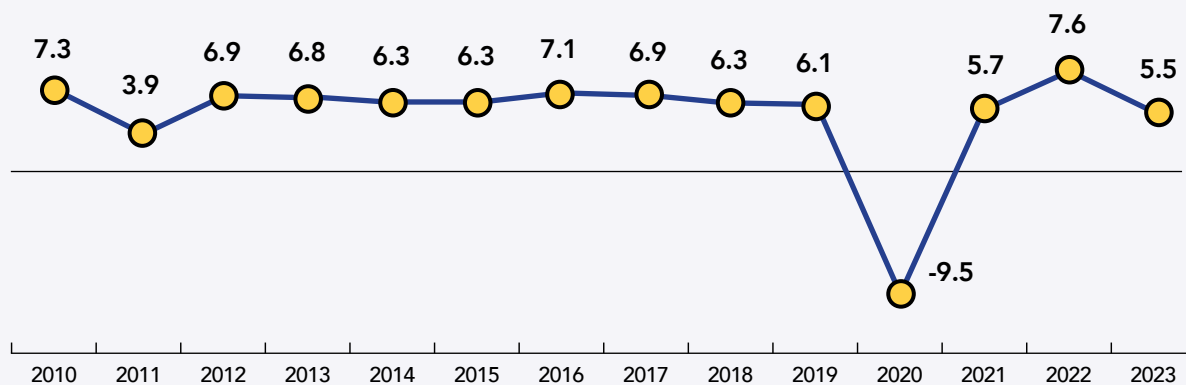
While 2023 had its own set of challenges and opportunities, we remain confident that the country's stable macroeconomic fundamentals will again help us toward solidifying our vision for a *Bagong Pilipinas*.

### Achieved strong economic performance.<sup>2</sup>

The Philippines remained one of the best-performing economies in Asia despite the domestic and global uncertainties experienced in 2023.

The country finished strong in 2023 with a 5.5% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth (see *Figure 1.1*). While our full-year GDP fell slightly below our 6.0% to 7.0% target for 2023, the government remains steadfast in advancing game-changing policies that aim to further boost our economic activities and achieve our medium- to long-term goals.

Figure 1.1 **GDP Growth Rates** (at constant 2018 prices)  
(2010 to 2023)



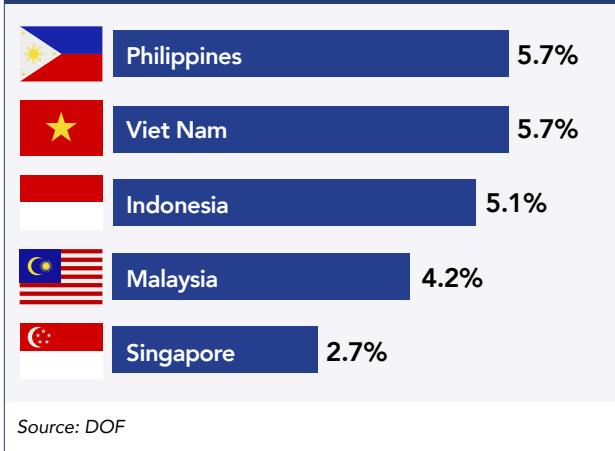
Sources: Department of Finance (DOF) and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)

1 NEDA, June 25, 2024; and DOF, June 28, 2024.

2 NEDA, June 25, 2024; and DOF, June 28, 2024.



**Figure 1.2 Q1 2024 GDP Growth Rate of Select Southeast Asian Economies**



Multilateral organizations have continued to express confidence in the country’s growth, projecting the Philippines to emerge as one of the most competitive economies in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2024.

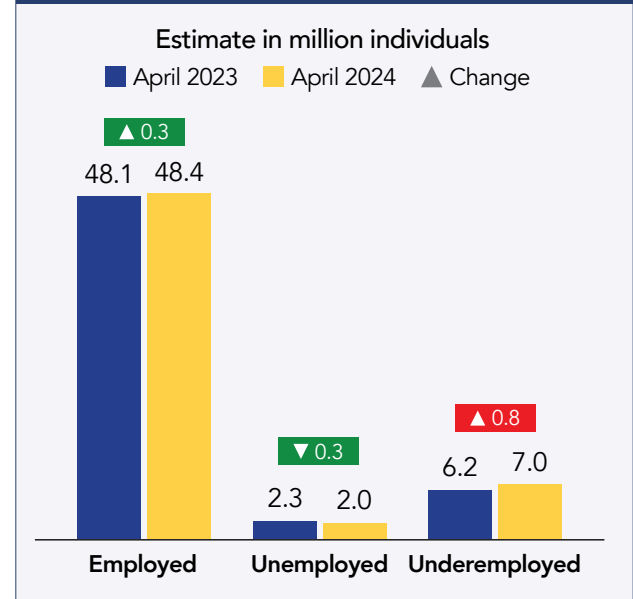
In fact, for the first quarter of 2024, the Philippines was again a front runner in the ASEAN region, posting the highest growth of 5.7% alongside Viet Nam (see Figure 1.2).

**Improved employment.**<sup>3</sup> Employment and unemployment rates improved in the April 2024 Labor Force Survey (see Figure 1.3). The improvement in employment shows growing confidence in the availability of work opportunities in the country.

In addition, the increasing labor force highlights the ever-present need to generate more work opportunities at a faster pace. Thus, we are continually implementing measures to improve the ease of doing business in the country to encourage investments and create more jobs for Filipinos.

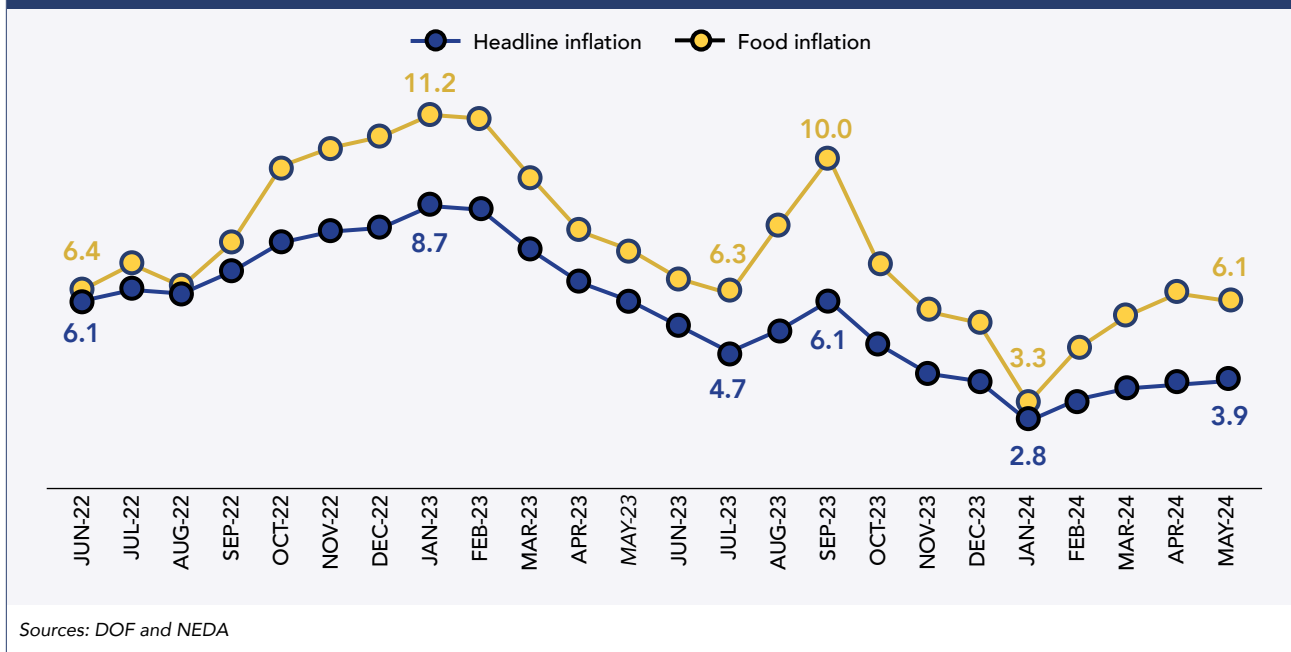
Further, challenges such as skills mismatch remain. To address the same, we facilitated the alignment of education, technical and vocational training programs, and other employment program initiatives to meet the demands of the labor market (see Chapter 3).

**Figure 1.3 Labor Force Figures (April 2023 and April 2024)**



3 Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), June 25, 2024.

Figure 1.4 **Headline and Food Inflation Rates**  
(June 2022 to May 2024)



**Eased inflation.**<sup>4</sup> Protecting the Filipinos' purchasing power remains our top priority.


Inflation in May 2024 was at 3.9%, still within the government's target of 2.0% to 4.0% inflation rate for the year (see Figure 1.4).

The uptrend in overall inflation in May 2024 was attributed to the increase in the non-food inflation rate of 2.6%, up from 2.4% in April 2024. Meanwhile, food inflation decelerated but remained elevated at 6.1%.





Amid the disruptions caused by El Niño and geopolitical tensions, the government is continuously carrying out strategies focused on increasing productivity, and building an efficient and resilient agriculture system.

Concerned agencies are also pursuing proactive measures in ensuring accessible and affordable food and energy sources for every Filipino (see Chapters 2 and 4).

**Maintained credit ratings.**<sup>5</sup> Our credit ratings and the positive outlook on the economy give us more access to the international financial market at lower interest rates. We are taking advantage of this opportunity to encourage foreign direct investments into the country.



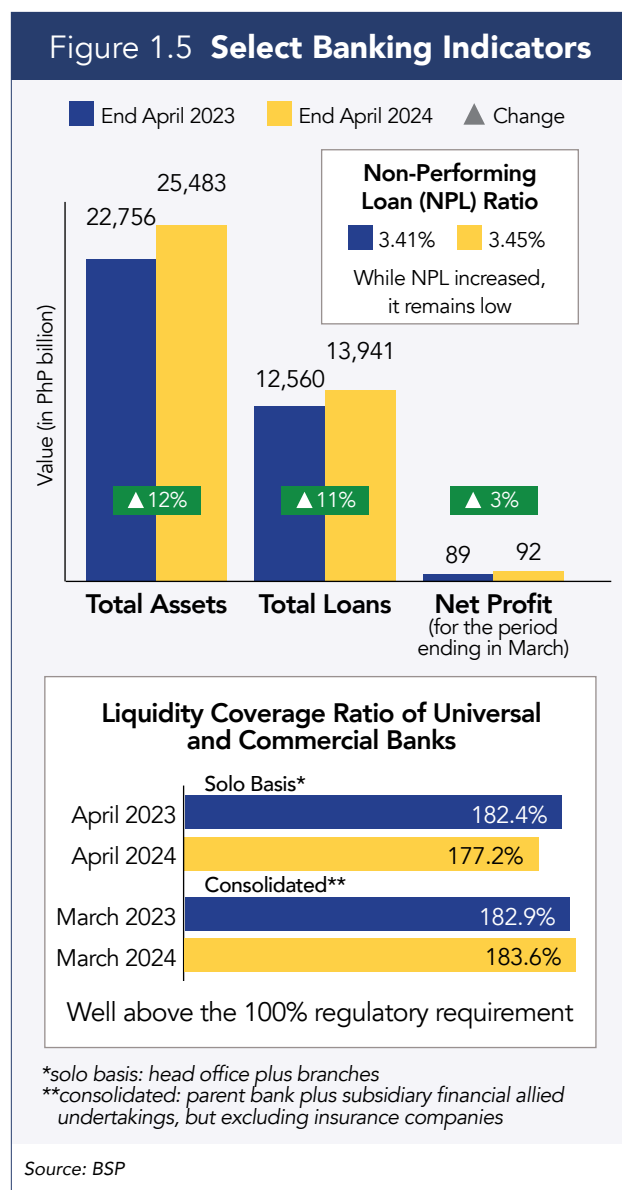
**Philippine Credit Rating**  
Investment Grade Ratings,  
Stable Outlook  
(as of June 2024)

 <b>BBB</b> Fitch Ratings	 <b>BBB+</b> Standard and Poor's	 <b>BAA2</b> Moody's
 <b>BBB+</b> Rating and Investment Information, Inc.	 <b>A-</b> Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd.	

4 DOF, June 28, 2024; and NEDA, July 01, 2024.  
5 DOF, June 28, 2024.

**Sustained strong financial system performance.**<sup>6</sup> Due to the improving macroeconomic environment and the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas'* (BSP) implementation of financial sector reforms, the Philippine banking system sustained its growth in assets, loans, deposits, and earnings (see *Figure 1.5*).

The asset growth reflected the banking system's ability to continue delivering financial products and services to support the country's requirements.



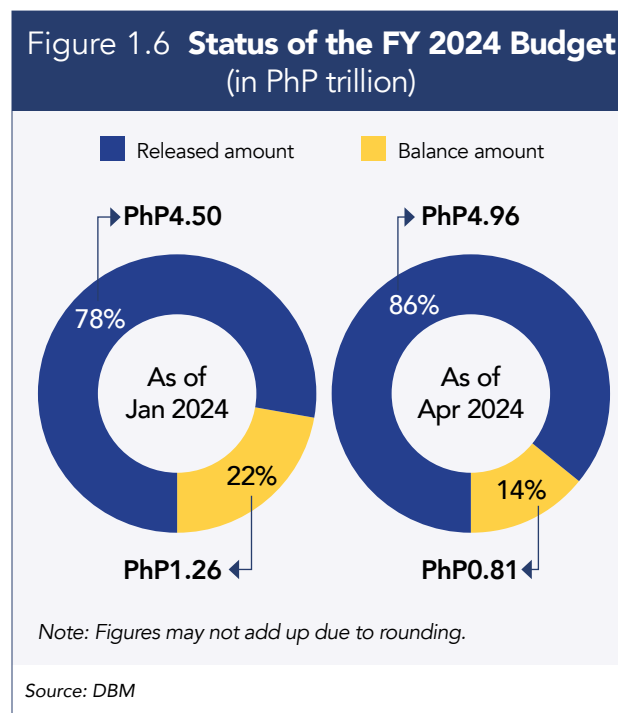
### Pursued Prudent Fiscal Management

Through the MTFF, the government was able to stay on the path of fiscal consolidation without sacrificing growth.<sup>7</sup>

**Implemented sound budget planning and administration.**<sup>8</sup> The national budget is an indispensable component of the government's strategy to reach its goals under the MTFF.

The timely passage of the national budget for 2023 (December 16, 2022) and 2024 (December 20, 2023), and the early release of the majority of funds to agencies, enabled the government to immediately implement planned projects.

As early as January 2024, we released 78% (PhP4.50 trillion) of the PhP5.77 trillion FY 2024 national budget to the concerned agencies. This increased to 86% or PhP4.96 trillion in April 2024 (see *Figure 1.6*).



6 BSP, June 27, 2024.  
 7 DOF, June 28, 2024.  
 8 Department of Budget and Management (DBM), June 26, 2024.

### Managed external payments position.<sup>9</sup>

We maintained a balance of payments (BOP) surplus in 2023, which provided us with foreign exchange resources that can be used to pay foreign debts and meet import requirements.

The full-year 2023 BOP position was at a surplus of USD3.7 billion, a turnaround from the USD7.3 billion deficit recorded in 2022. The country's overall BOP position likewise posted a surplus of USD1.6 billion in January to May 2024, although lower than the USD2.9 billion surplus recorded for the same period in 2023.

Furthermore, the country's gross international reserves (GIR) level in May 2024 represents a more than adequate<sup>10</sup> external liquidity buffer.

### Pursued prudent debt management.<sup>11</sup>

To manage the country's debt ratio, we continue to adhere to prudent



### Philippine GIR (As of end-May 2024)

## USD105.02 billion



### 7.7 months'

worth of imports of goods and payments of services and primary income



### 6.1 times

the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity



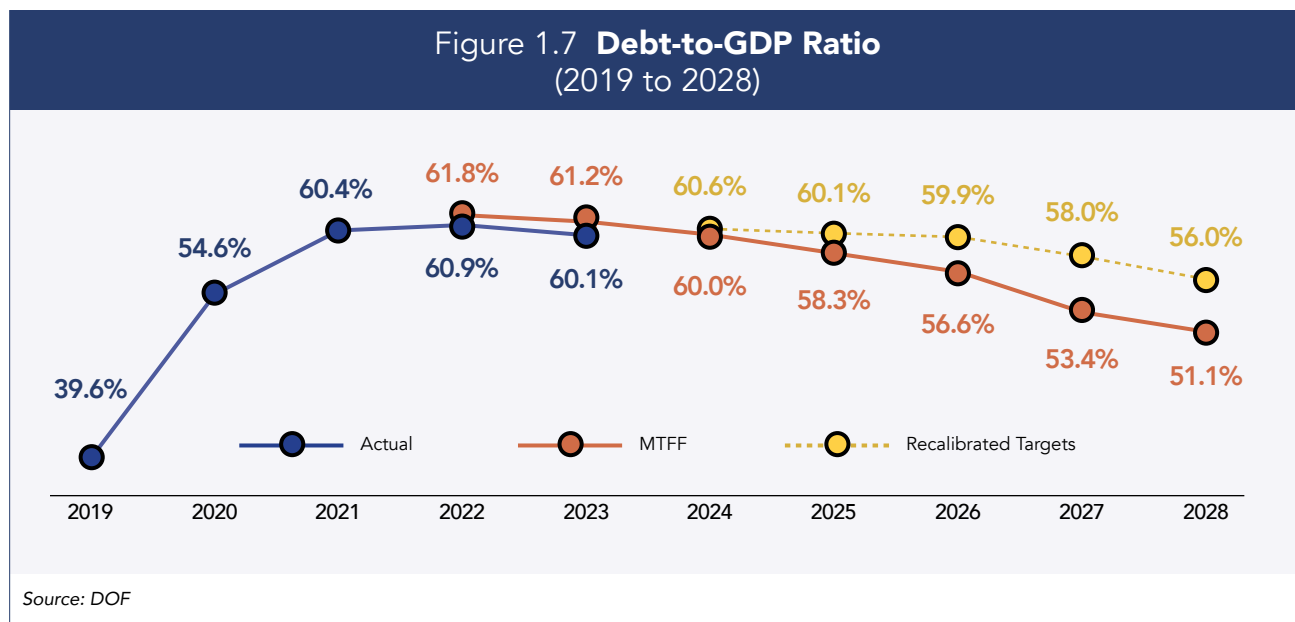
### 3.8 times

based on residual maturity

debt management strategies that are supported by resilient and robust economic growth.

We improved our debt ratio from 60.9% in 2022 to 60.1% in 2023. Based on recent developments, we expect the debt-to-GDP ratio to fall around 60% by 2025 (see Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7 **Debt-to-GDP Ratio**  
(2019 to 2028)



<sup>9</sup> BSP, June 27, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> By convention, GIR is viewed to be adequate if it can finance at least three-months' worth of the country's imports of goods and payments of services and primary income. The level of GIR, as of a particular period, is considered adequate if it provides at least 100% cover for the payment of the country's foreign liabilities, public and private, falling within the immediate 12-month period.

<sup>11</sup> DOF, June 28, 2024.

**Enhanced revenue collections.**<sup>12</sup> In 2023, we collected PhP3.82 trillion in revenue. This is 8% higher than the PhP3.55 trillion collected in 2022.

For the first five months of 2024, our revenue collections reached PhP1.85 trillion, a 16% increase from the PhP1.59 trillion collected in the same period last year.

The continued improvement in the performance of revenue collecting agencies, such as the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the Bureau of Customs (BOC), was a result of our intensified efforts to strengthen tax enforcement programs and further encourage tax compliance.

Further, with the enactment of Republic Act (RA) No. 11976<sup>13</sup> on January 05, 2024, we simplified tax compliance procedures and reduced red tape by digitalizing processes.<sup>14</sup> This makes it easier for taxpayers to fulfill their obligations and fosters a culture of trust and partnership between the government and its citizens.

We also recently signed into law RA No. 12001<sup>15</sup> on June 13, 2024, which adopts a uniform real property appraisal aligned with international standards. RPVARA will eliminate wide disparities and promote integrity and fairness in real property valuation and appraisal in the country.

This law also encourages tax compliance by providing taxpayers amnesty on penalties, surcharges, and interests for taxpayers with unpaid real property tax, which can be availed within two years from the enactment of RPVARA.



*We found it challenging to adapt to the complex invoicing system in the Philippines. We were surprised to know that the Philippines requires invoice or receipt depending on whether we sell goods or service. So, it is a welcome news that the EOPT Act will now require only invoice as the primary document to issue for our sales, be it goods or service.*

*We believe that EOPT Act, along with other programs from the Philippine government, will help attract more foreign businesses to set up shop in the country."*

Shino Yamamoto  
Toyoko Inn Co., Ltd.  
Japan

12 DOF, June 28, 2024 and July 04, 2024.

13 Titled, "Ease of Paying Taxes (EOPT) Act."

14 This includes the filing of tax returns through electronic platforms. (Source: BIR Revenue Regulations No. 3-2024)

15 Titled, "Real Property Valuation and Assessment Reform Act (RPVARA)."

In addition, we are leveraging the government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs) that have exercised good corporate governance and significantly contributed dividends to the national government.

In 2023, total dividend collections from 52 GOCCs amounted to PhP100.74 billion, 47% higher than the PhP68.34 billion collected in 2022. As of May 31, 2024, GOCC remittances amounted to

PhP90.8 billion (see Figure 1.8 for the top contributing GOCCs).

We are tapping the fund balances of GOCCs amounting to more than PhP200 billion to fund our development priorities.

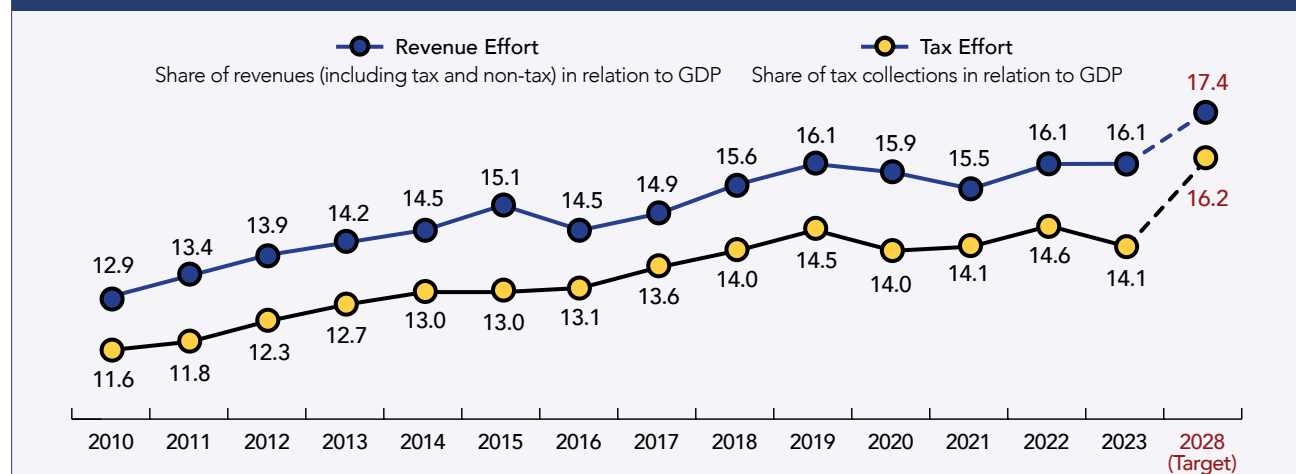
We are confident that these efforts would result in improved revenue collections and help us achieve our revenue and tax effort targets (see Figure 1.9).

Figure 1.8 **Top 10 Contributing GOCCs** (in PhP billion)  
(January 01 to May 31, 2024)



Source: DOF

Figure 1.9 **Revenue and Tax Effort as Percentage to GDP**  
(2010 to 2023)



Source: DOF



# Boosting Investment Promotion and Industry Development



The President, along with Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Alfredo Pascual, leads the inauguration of a new Unilever factory in Cavite on September 22, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

## Promoted Ease of Doing Business<sup>16</sup>

Recognizing the essential role of investments in economic development, the Philippines continued to implement reforms to improve the business climate.

### Applied game-changing reforms.<sup>17</sup>

To further encourage the participation of the business sector, we implemented regulatory reforms such as RA No. 11966,<sup>18</sup> which was signed into law on December 05, 2023 (see Figure 1.10).

The PPP Code is fostering a more competitive environment for PPPs by addressing bottlenecks and challenges in the implementation of PPP projects.

We also implemented other game-changing structural reforms, such as the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act and amendments to the Public Service Act, Retail Trade Liberalization Act,

Foreign Investments Act, and the revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Renewable Energy Act.

## Figure 1.10 Major Reforms under the PPP Code



Unifying a fragmented legal framework for PPPs at the national and local levels



Updating the approval thresholds for national PPP projects and allowing the NEDA Board-Investment Coordination Committee to update it



Enhancing competition and protection of public interest by improving the framework for unsolicited proposals



Providing a predictable and stable tariff regime



Strengthening PPP institutions such as the PPP Governing Board, PPP Center, Project Development and Monitoring Facility, and the newly created PPP Risk Management Fund



Institutionalizing international PPP best practices

Source: NEDA

<sup>16</sup> DTI, June 26, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> DTI, June 26, 2024; and NEDA, June 28, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Titled, "Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Code."

**Table 1.1 Approved Projects under the Green Lanes for Strategic Investments**  
(February 2023 to June 26, 2024)

Sector	Number of Certified Projects	Total Project Cost (in PhP billion)
Renewable Energy	74	2,079.58
Digital Infrastructure	5	338.23
Food Security	2	3.40
Manufacturing	2	29.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>2,450.82</b>

Source: DTI



*The Green Lane Certificate of Endorsement from the BOI has been incredibly helpful in expediting the permitting process for several of our geothermal projects. The certificate has proven extremely beneficial as it has allowed us to meet our milestones in our various projects through faster facilitation of permits and licenses.*

Napoleon Saporsantos, Jr.  
President, Philippine Geothermal  
Production Company, Inc.

**Implemented Green Lanes for Strategic Investments.**<sup>19</sup> Last year, I instructed all national government agencies and offices involved in the issuance of permits, licenses, certifications, or authorizations to establish a “green lane” for endorsed strategic investments.

The issuance of Executive Order (EO) No. 18, s. 2023<sup>20</sup> is among the significant reforms to address the “pain points” faced by investors when doing business in the country. It aims to ease the barriers across multiple regulatory agencies that hamper the realization of strategic investments.

As of June 26, 2024, we have facilitated 83 projects worth PhP2.45 trillion. Of the total, 32 projects (PhP1.31 trillion) are registered with the DTI-Board of Investments (BOI) (see *Table 1.1*).

**Digitalized and streamlined business processes.**<sup>21</sup> We continued to streamline our processes to facilitate the entry of investors into the country (see *Chapter 7*).

The DTI-BOI coordinated with government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to streamline and expedite the processing and issuance of permits and licenses, including a sample Provincial Green Lane.

We implemented efforts on streamlining processes and enhancing efficiency in business registration, consumer complaints handling, and issuance of permits.

The Business Name Registration System Next Gen enabled end-to-end online registration (from registration application to downloading

19 DTI, June 26, 2024.

20 Titled, “Constituting Green Lanes for Strategic Investments.”

21 DTI, June 26, 2024; and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), July 01, 2024.



*The eSPARC registration system is definitely a great improvement from the old way of registering corporations. We don't need to physically line up to have our concerns addressed and registrants can also avail of the option of one-day processing as long as we can make sure that all details are correct. Congratulations and thank you, SEC."*

Atty. Fiona Mae Corral-Bobis  
ACES Comprehensive Business Solutions Co.  
Legazpi City, Albay



### Online Business Name Registration

**6% INCREASE**

**571,300**

Registrants

January to May 2023



**605,581**

Registrants

January to May 2024

of certificate of registration) within eight minutes anytime and anywhere using the client's mobile devices connected to the internet.

The Philippine Online Dispute Resolution System provided easy access for reporting and tracking of complaints, from filing to resolution. Lodging a complaint in the system (with proof of transaction) can be completed in 10 to 20 minutes depending on the level of complexity of the concern.

Finally, the DTI's Integrated Registration Information System resulted in a 95.5% satisfaction rating in the processing of 40,273 applications in 2023 for permits, licenses, and accreditations.

We also transformed the business registration of companies in the SEC in keeping with our commitment to propel

the capital market and business sector. The SEC's "Zuper Easy Registration Online" or "SEC ZERO" is an overarching campaign, which allows for zero face-to-face transactions, zero paper, zero notarization, and zero wet signatures, from incorporation, payment, and post-incorporation activities of corporate vehicles.

These activities include the Electronic Simplified Processing of Application for Registration of Company (eSPARC), which reduced the processing time of registration of corporations and partnerships applications from one to two months to one to seven working days.

The SEC is also implementing a One Day Submission and Electronic Registration of Companies that ensures one-day processing of applications of domestic stock corporations.

For foreign investors, the SEC Foreign Investment Registration Station allows for a fast and easy lane to set up their respective companies in the Philippines.

Truly, we have established platforms and measures for all Filipinos (here and abroad) and our foreign colleagues, to incorporate anytime and anywhere.

## Attracted Job-Generating Investments

Our efforts to provide a business-friendly regulatory environment have led to an increase in investments and jobs in the country.

**Increased investments.**<sup>22</sup> The adoption of structural reforms and relaxation of restrictions on foreign ownership in various sectors, coupled with aggressive investment promotion during our foreign trips, resulted in an increase in Investment Promotion Agencies (IPA) approvals of proposed investments and employment to be generated from these (see Figure 1.11).

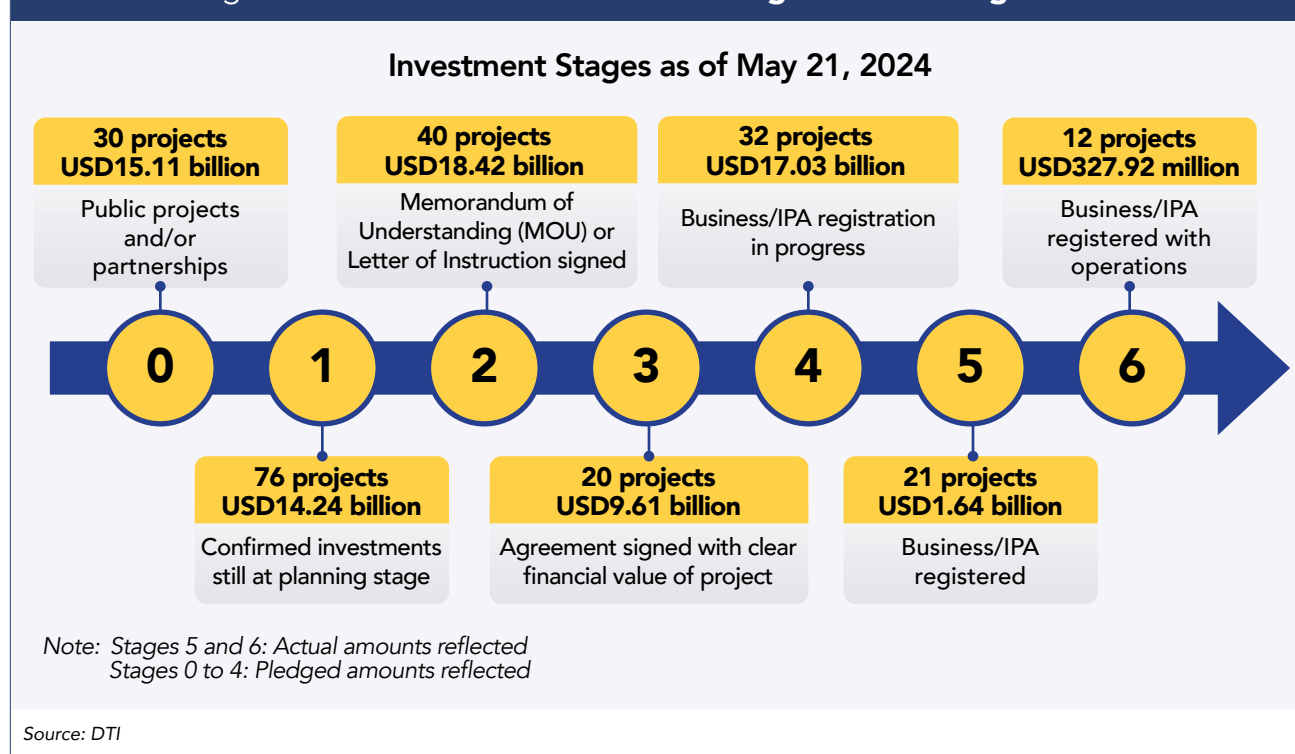
As of May 21, 2024, the DTI is monitoring 231 investment leads or projects worth more than USD76 billion or PhP4 trillion from foreign visits.

Figure 1.11 IPA-Approved Investments



Of these, 12 projects worth USD327.92 million have started their operations while 21 more (USD1.64 billion) have been registered in IPAs (see Figure 1.12).

Figure 1.12 Status of Investment Pledges from Foreign Visits



22 NEDA, June 28, 2024; DTI, June 26, 2024; and Maharlika Investment Corporation (MIC), June 26, 2024.

We are also looking forward to the realization of investments of the MIC. Its priorities include energy security; infrastructure; digital connectivity; healthcare; food security; mineral processing; tourism; transportation; and aerospace and aviation.

Recently, the MIC has entered several partnerships to address power challenges in Mindoro and Palawan and explore investment opportunities within Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) properties.



MIC President and Chief Executive Officer (PCEO) Rafael Jose Consing, Jr. and BCDA PCEO Joshua Bingcang sign the MOU to explore investment opportunities within BCDA properties, including the Clark Freeport and Special Economic Zone on April 29, 2024.

*Photo Credit: DOF*

**Strengthened the MSMEs.**<sup>23</sup> The MSME sector forms the backbone of the Philippine economy, contributing about 40% of the country's GDP. In 2022, 99.59% of total establishments in the country were classified as MSMEs. This highlights their huge impact on the creation of livelihood and provision of employment.



*Daghang salamat DTI sa inyong tabang og suporta kanamo nga mga small businesses aron moangat ang among negosyo. Hinaut daghan pa nga negosyanteng Filipino nga inyong matabangan og mabag-o ang ilang kinabuhi aron molambo atong komunidad.*

*Salamat DTI! Dili nako ni maabot kung wala mo nga nag uban og nagiya kanako kanunay."*

*Thank you very much DTI for your assistance and support to us, small business owners, toward developing our businesses. I hope that you could help and transform the lives of more Filipino business people toward the development of our society. Thank you, DTI! I couldn't have done this without your help!*

Julieta Dela Cerna  
Owner  
Mama Jita's Food Products  
Mambajao, Camiguin

### Box 1.1 DTI MSME Program Beneficiary

Yvonne Dale Buenconsejo, a 35-year-old mother of three from Dalaguete, Cebu was invited by a Negosyo Business Counsellor to attend a Simple Bookkeeping Seminar in September 2022. Thereafter, she discovered various programs offered by the DTI for MSMEs.

From a modest pop-up coffee stand, Yvonne and her husband embarked on a mission to spread their passion for coffee and mornings, encouraging others to appreciate the benefits of early rising for both physical and mental well-being. Their brand proudly carries the moniker "5 AM."



*Photo Credit and Source: DTI*

To ensure a holistic framework to help MSMEs adapt to the ever-changing requirements of their consumers, we laid down the MSME Development Plan 2023-2028. It seeks to build a thriving ecosystem of MSMEs that are competitive both domestically and globally, resilient, innovative, and sustainable in the face of operational challenges.

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions presented new opportunities for MSMEs such as the growth of delivery service businesses, digital entrepreneurs, and community-based initiatives stemming from innovative products and services.

There was also a significant rise in e-commerce, a shift toward remote work, and widespread utilization of online platforms and distribution networks.

We acknowledge the significant impact of e-commerce in reducing barriers to entry and lowering operating costs for businesses, particularly for MSMEs. It enabled them to compete on a level playing field with large enterprises, accessing markets that were previously beyond their reach.

In this context, the passage of RA No. 11967<sup>24</sup> on December 05, 2023 is both timely and essential.

The ITA provides the legal framework for the establishment of safe and reliable platforms for efficient and transparent internet transactions. It also encourages fair competition, creating an environment where the benefits of the digital economy are accessible to all.

To harness the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and drive the digital transformation of industries for improved production and global competitiveness, we operationalized the Center for AI Research on July 03, 2024.

With an initial team of 10 data scientists, the center serves as a hub for collaborative AI research, development of products and services, and provision of training programs.

We are also providing MSMEs with financing, through the *Pondo Para sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso* (P3) Program, among others.

24 Titled, "Internet Transactions Act (ITA) of 2023."



### P3 Program



**PhP8.16 billion** worth of loans released to **154,423 microentrepreneurs** from July 2022 to May 2024



this is **68.6%** of the loans released from January 2017 to June 2022

We also enacted laws to boost local industries. These include RA No. 11981,<sup>25</sup> which was signed into law on February 26, 2024. It encourages, supports, and promotes the production of local products and services by domestic enterprises that are globally competitive.

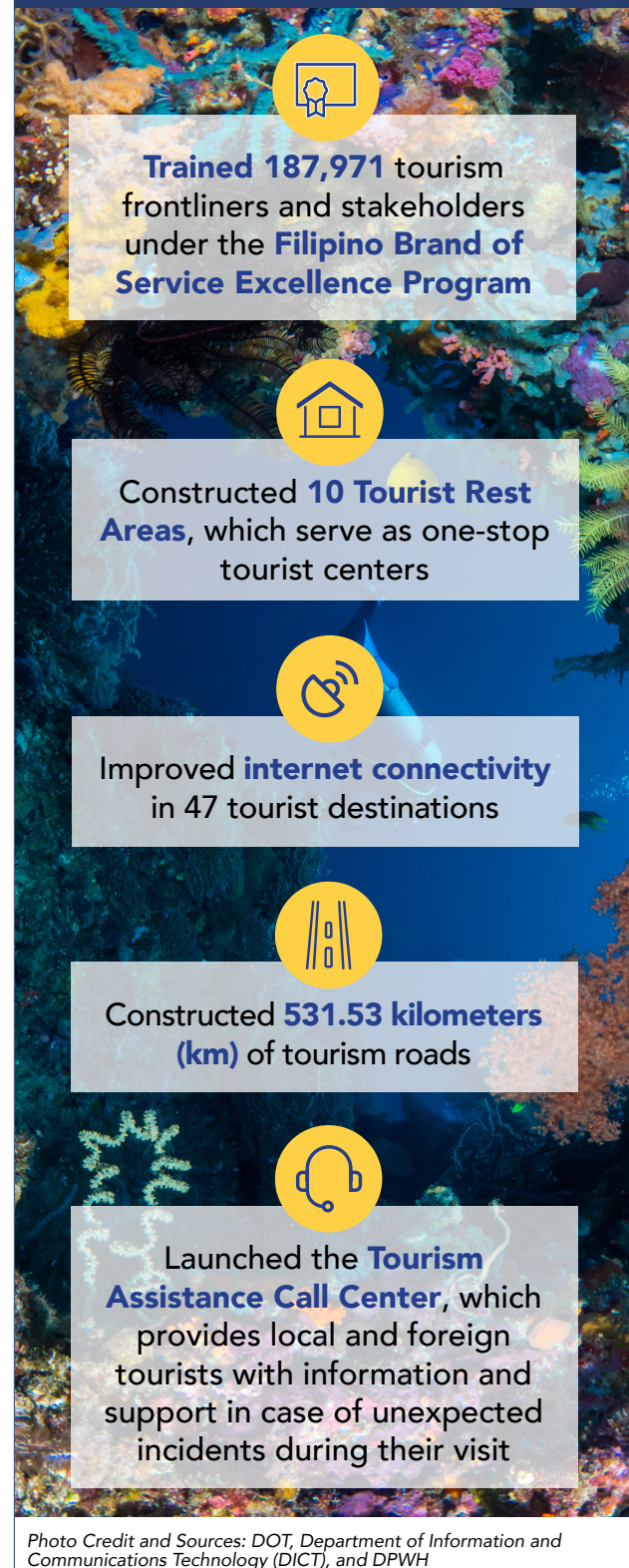
The implementation of RA No. 11904<sup>26</sup> has been in full swing since its passage in July 2022. In 2023, the Philippine creative industries accounted for PhP1.72 trillion of GDP and employed approximately 7.26 million individuals. Thus, we aim to continue the strong growth momentum of these industries.

Relatedly, the DTI spearheads the *Malikhaing Pinoy* Program, which champions the growth and global recognition of the Philippine creative industries.

### **Revitalized the tourism industry.**<sup>27</sup>

The Philippines offers breathtaking sights and natural wonders, a vibrant culture, and hospitable people with brimming warm smiles. To help us realize the goal of becoming a tourism powerhouse in Asia, we implemented efforts to enhance tourists' experience (see *Figure 1.13* for select initiatives).

Figure 1.13 **Select Tourism Convenience Efforts**

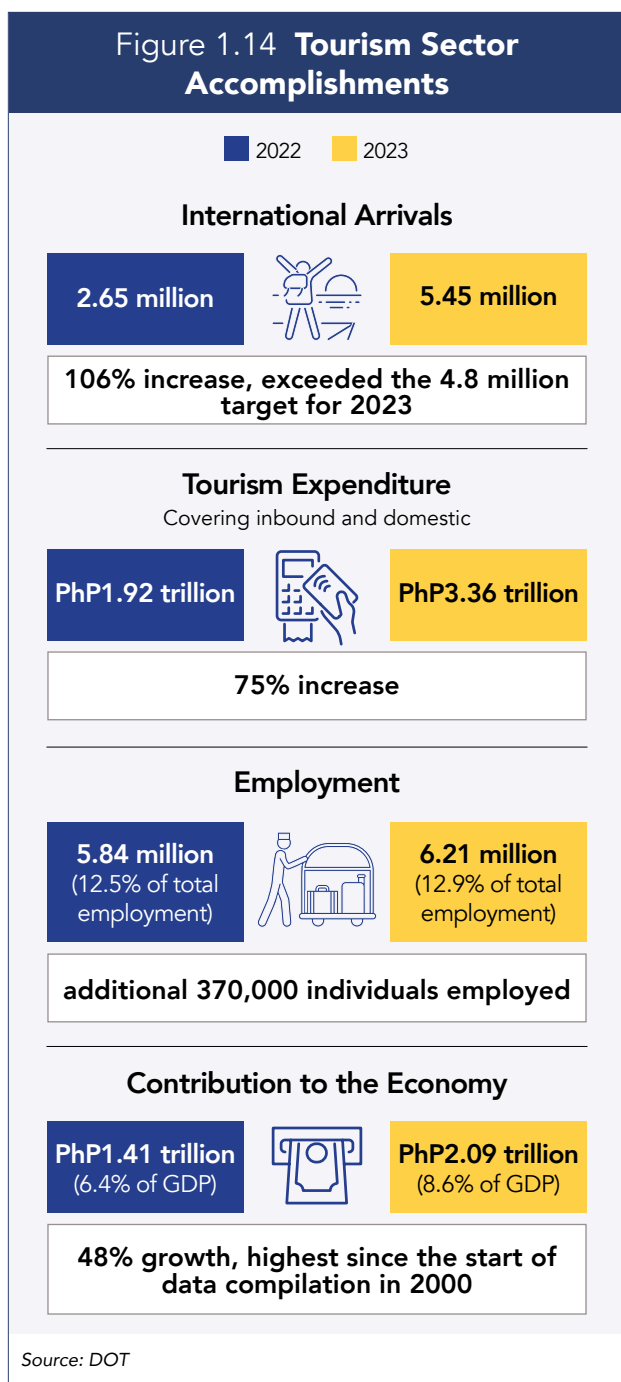


25 Titled, "Tatak Pinoy Act."

26 Titled, "Philippine Creative Industries Development Act."

27 Department of Tourism (DOT), July 02, 2024.

Figure 1.14 **Tourism Sector Accomplishments**



Our efforts to take advantage of revenue tourism have borne fruit (see Figure 1.14).

For the first time in 15 years, the Philippines posted a net trade surplus of USD2.45 billion in travel in 2023. This means that foreign visitors to the Philippines spent more than the amount Filipinos shelled out for travel abroad.

We also launched new products to further develop tourism in the country (see Figure 1.15 for some of the new tourism products offered).

In 2023, the DOT also introduced the Philippine Experience: Culture, Heritage and Arts Caravans Program. This aims to develop a cultural tourism circuit focusing on heritage, culture, and arts.

Moreover, the *Bisita, Be My Guest* program initiative motivates Filipinos, especially Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and Overseas Filipinos (OFs), to invite foreign friends and family to visit the Philippines.

In 2023, program winners were awarded a condominium unit (1 winner), house and lot (1), shopping vouchers (4), and holiday packages (32) with roundtrip tickets to tourist destinations in the country.

Meanwhile, the Tourism Champions Challenge initiative aims to empower LGUs nationwide toward inclusive and competitive tourism growth through national and local collaboration. On April 15, 2024, 15 LGUs received monetary support for the implementation of their tourism projects.

In 2023, the DOT partnered with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Department of National Defense (DND) to strengthen collaboration in ensuring peace and order as part of our tourism development programs. This aims to build visitors' confidence in the security situation in Mindanao, showcase its readiness for tourism, and contribute to the area's development.



Figure 1.15 **Select New Tourism Products****Dive Tourism**

On October 03, 2023, the Philippines was honored as the World's Leading Dive Destination and Asia's Leading Dive Destination at the World Travel Awards 2023. The Philippines also received the Best Value Destination and Best Macro Life Destination in the Pacific Region from the Scuba Diving Magazine Readers' Choice Awards.

**Cruise Tourism**

We welcomed 125 cruise calls in 2023, supporting the country's distinction as Asia's Best Cruise Destination awarded by the World Travel Awards 2023.

**Sports Tourism**

We hosted international events to highlight the Philippines' sports tourism potential, including special tours for the FIBA World Cup (August 25 to September 30, 2023) and the 27<sup>th</sup> Siargao International Surfing Cup (October 25 to November 01, 2023).

**Farm Tourism**

From December 05 to 08, 2023, we held the National Farm Tourism Summit and Trade Fair to promote agrotourism. We also accredited 216 farm tourism sites nationwide in 2023.

**Halal and Muslim-Friendly Tourism**

On November 21, 2023 at the Dusit Thani Hotel, we hosted "BISMILLAH: An Evening of Faith, Love, and the Flavors of Mindanao," featuring Mindanawon chefs and Muslim cuisine. This event aimed to showcase Mindanao's diversity and initiate discussions on lowering security alerts.

**Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE)**

The DOT is working with industry stakeholders to make the Philippines as the Asia's leading MICE destination. A MICE Conference was held in Davao City on March 01 to 03, 2023, with over 500 in-person and nearly 1,000 online delegates.

**Food and Gastronomy Tourism**

The DOT and United Nations (UN) Tourism conducted the First UN Tourism Regional Forum on Gastronomy Tourism for Asia and the Pacific in Cebu from June 26 to 28, 2024. This event celebrated the transformative impact of gastronomy tourism and showcased Filipino cuisine globally.

Photo Credit and Source: DOT

# Enhancing Transportation Connectivity



The North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) spans 147 km from Pampanga to Laguna. The construction of various segments of the project is now ongoing.

*Photo Credit: Hyundai Engineering and Construction-Megawide-Dong-Ah Joint Venture*

The backbone of a strong economy is an efficient transportation system that seamlessly connects the entire country. In the past two years, we expanded and strengthened our infrastructure system.

As promised during my first State of the Nation Address (SONA), we are sustaining our infrastructure development spending at 5% to 6% of GDP.

For FY 2023, total infrastructure disbursements amounted to PhP1.42 trillion or 5.8% of GDP. For FY 2024, the programmed infrastructure spending would

represent 5.6% of the country's GDP. We target to sustain these strong public infrastructure investments until 2028.<sup>28</sup>

As of April 2024, we are pursuing the implementation of 185 Infrastructure Flagship Projects (IFPs) with a total cost of PhP9.55 trillion. Of these IFPs, 134 projects (72.4%) aim to improve physical connectivity.

These transformative and urgently needed projects showcase the government's Build Better More program.<sup>29</sup>

28 DBM, June 28, 2024.  
29 NEDA, June 28, 2024.

## Strengthened Sea Connectivity<sup>30</sup>

As an archipelagic country, the need to improve maritime connectivity is of prime importance. Thus, we are implementing port development projects to provide better access to our country's coastal and island communities.

From July 2022 to March 2024, we completed more than 30 social and tourism port<sup>31</sup> projects and 26 commercial port<sup>32</sup> projects, including developments in the San Roque Port in Samar and Tubajon Port in Dinagat Islands.

By 2028, we target to complete 200 additional social and tourism port development projects, including the PhP16.93-billion New Cebu International Container Port Project. This is one of our big-ticket IFPs. It will increase the operational capacity of the main cargo gateway in the Central Visayas Region by sharing the international container volume of the existing Cebu Baseport.

In partnership with the private sector, we completed the Batangas Port's expanded passenger terminal building (PTB). Inaugurated on April 26, 2024, the terminal now has an 8,000-passenger seating capacity, which is 220% higher compared to its previous 2,500-seating capacity.

With the expansion of its terminal, the Batangas Port's annual passenger capacity will significantly increase from four million to 12.8 million.



The expanded PTB of the Batangas Port is the biggest, busiest, and most modern inter-island terminal under the PPA. It was inaugurated in April 2024.

Photo Credit: PPA



*Sobrang amazed ako sa pinagbago niya [Batangas Port], gustuhin mo na lang mag-RoRo [roll-on/roll-off], mag-land trip ka. Inayos nila lahat na maging komportable ang mga tao... Nagpapasalamat ako kasi ang ganda ng mga facilities ngayon."*

Cielo Reyes  
Passenger at the Batangas Port  
Batangas City

30 Department of Transportation (DOTr), June 20 and 24, 2024; and DOTr, Correspondence, July 02, 2024.

31 Funded by the DOTr, social and tourism ports are service-oriented port projects that aim to connect municipalities across the country.

32 Funded by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), commercial ports are profit-driven ports developed due to economic considerations.

## Improved Air Connectivity<sup>33</sup>

There is a pressing need to improve our country's international and local airports, which are crucial in ensuring inter-island connectivity and international mobility. Despite the efforts of my predecessors, our country's main gateway, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), remains congested while many of our local airports are still old and dilapidated.

To address these, we are prioritizing the modernization of our airports. We completed over 40 airport development and improvement projects as of March 2024, including projects for the Bicol International Airport and General Santos City Airport (see Figure 1.16). We target to complete 153 additional airport development projects by 2028.

Among our current initiatives to improve air connectivity, the most significant is the privatization of the NAIA.

After three decades, finally, on March 18, 2024, we witnessed the signing of the Concession Agreement for the NAIA PPP Project.

## NAIA Privatization Expected Outcomes



### Increased Passenger Capacity

from **35 million** passengers per year to **62 million** passengers per year



### Increased Air Traffic Movement

from **40 to 42** flights per hour to **48** flights per hour



### Jobs Generated

more than **58,000** jobs to be generated due to increase in tourism activities and spending by 2027

To further help decongest the NAIA, we are closely working with the private sector in expediting the implementation of the New Manila International Airport (NMIA) in Bulacan, which is one of our IFPs. As of May 31, 2024, the land development works for the NMIA is 84% accomplished.

Parallel to these airport modernization efforts, we also facilitated the opening of additional international and domestic flights (see Figure 1.17).

Figure 1.16 Select Completed Airport Development and Improvement Projects

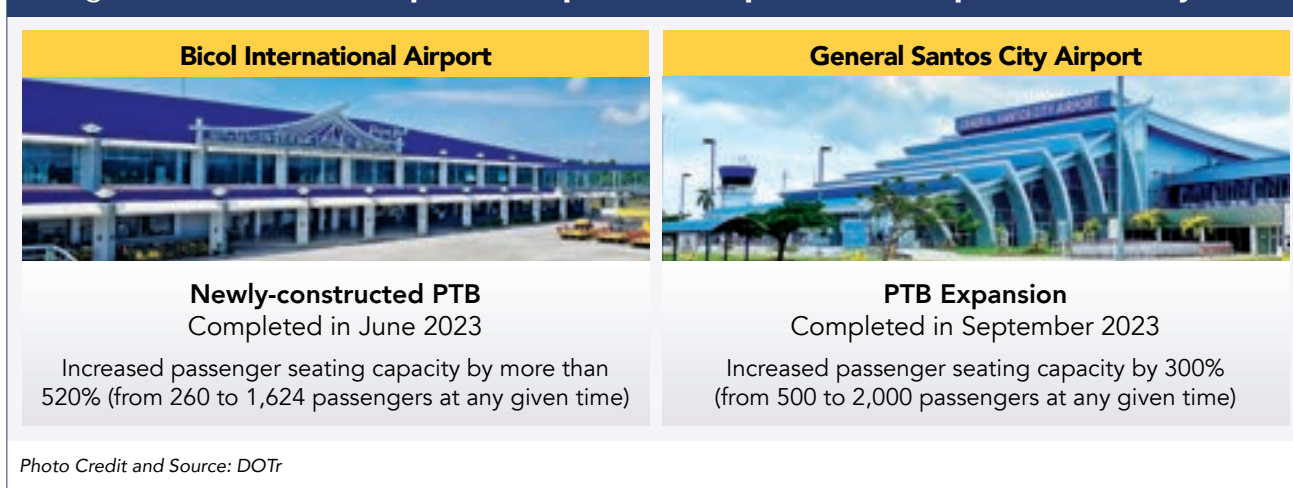


Photo Credit and Source: DOTr

33 DOTr, June 24 and 27, 2024.

Figure 1.17 Additional International and Domestic Flights



Code	International Airports	Code	Local Airports	Code	Local Airports
MED	Prince Mohammad Bin Abdulaziz International Airport, Saudi Arabia	MNL	Manila International Airport	IAO	Siargao Airport, Surigao del Norte
PKX	Beijing Daxing International Airport, China	MPH	Godofredo P. Ramos Airport, Malay, Aklan	ENI	El Nido Airport, Palawan
TFU	Chengdu Tianfu International Airport, China	KLO	Kalibo International Airport, Aklan	LLC	Cagayan North International Airport, Lal-lo, Cagayan
NGB	Ningbo Lishe International Airport, China	BPA	Borongan Airport, Eastern Samar	CRK	Clark International Airport, Pampanga
PER	Perth Airport, Australia	DRP	Bicol International Airport, Albay	CGM	Camiguin Airport, Mambajao, Camiguin
		LAO	Laoag International Airport, Ilocos Norte	CEB	Mactan-Cebu International Airport, Cebu

Source: DOTr

## Advanced Land Connectivity<sup>34</sup>

We are expanding our transportation network through the construction of strategic roads and inter-island bridges.

The DPWH constructed, maintained, rehabilitated, widened, and upgraded 11,945 km of roads and 1,263 bridges.

In February 2024, we opened the Airport-New Clark City (NCC) Access Road (ANAR), which connects the Clark International Airport (CRK) to the NCC. The ANAR reduced the travel time between CRK and NCC from one hour to 20 minutes.

We also increased the budget allocation for the improvement of the Maharlika Highway, which serves as the country's main transportation artery (see Figure 1.18).

The Maharlika Highway Improvement Program includes the construction of the Minanga Bridge in Isabela and Andanan Bridge in Agusan del Sur, which were completed in June and September 2023, respectively. Each bridge benefits around 10,000 motorists per day.

**Expedited the implementation of the Luzon Spine Expressway Network (LSEN) Program.** The LSEN aims to shorten the travel time between the Ilocos and Bicol Regions from 20 hours to only nine hours. Milestone developments were achieved in various projects under the LSEN Program (see Figure 1.19).



The 900-meter Sacobia Bridge is part of the ANAR. The entire ANAR was opened in February 2024.

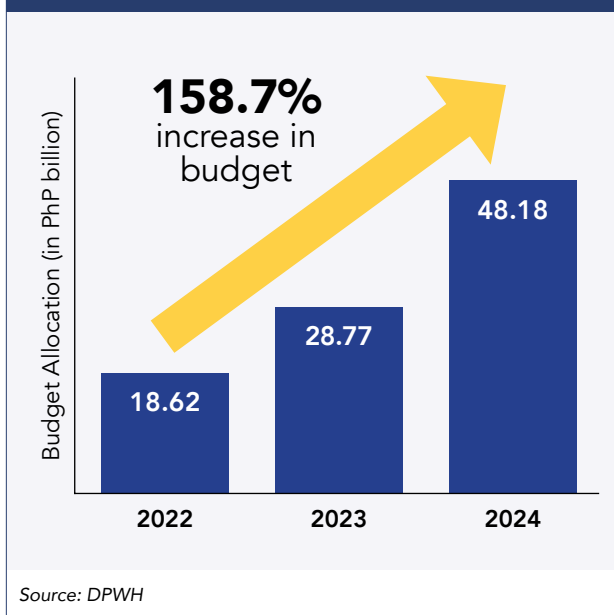
Photo Credit and Source: BCDA



The Matnog-Sta. Magdalena-Bulusan Road provides easy access to declared tourism sites in the municipalities of Matnog, Sta. Magdalena, and Bulusan in Sorsogon. This PhP1.36-billion road was completed in April 2023.

Photo Credit and Source: DPWH

Figure 1.18 Maharlika Highway Budget



34 DPWH, June 25 and 28, 2024 and July 03, 2024; BCDA, June 29, 2024; and Toll Regulatory Board (TRB), July 04, 2024.

Figure 1.19 Milestone Accomplishments under the LSEN Program

**Arterial Road Bypass (Plaridel) Project, Phase III (22.46 km)**

- 92.1% accomplished, for completion by August 2024
- Will reduce the travel time between Balagtas and San Rafael in Bulacan from 69 minutes to 24 minutes
- Will benefit 15,000 motorists per day

**Milestone accomplishment: Additional 7.74 km opened in October 2023**

**Central Luzon Link Expressway Project, Phase I (29.55 km)**

- 97.6% accomplished, for completion by November 2024
- Will reduce the travel time between Tarlac City and Cabanatuan City from 70 minutes to 20 minutes
- Will benefit 11,200 motorists per day

**Milestone accomplishment: Additional 6.45 km opened in March 2024**

**North Luzon Expressway (NLEX)-South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) Connector Road (7.70 km)**

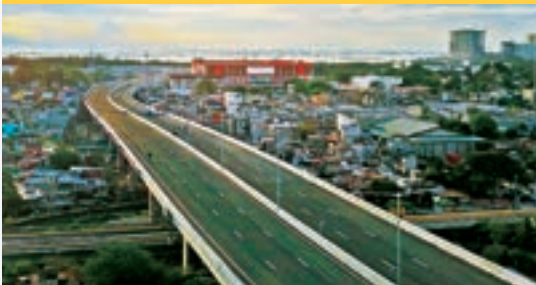
- 95.4% accomplished, for completion by the fourth quarter of 2024
- Will reduce the travel time between NLEX and SLEX from two hours to 20 minutes
- Will benefit 35,000 motorists per day

**Milestone accomplishment: Part of Section 2 (España-Magsaysay) opened in October 2023**

**Cavite-Laguna Expressway (44.58 km)**

- 61.4% accomplished, for completion by May 2025
- Will reduce the travel time between CAVITEX\* (Kawit) and SLEX (Mamplasan Interchange) from two hours to 35 minutes
- Will benefit 37,000 motorists per day

**Milestone accomplishment: Subsection 4 (Silang East Interchange to Silang Aguinaldo Interchange) opened in November 2023**

**CAVITEX C5 Link Expressway (7.70 km)**

- 73.4% accomplished, for completion by August 2025
- Will reduce the travel time between R-1 Expressway portion of CAVITEX (R-1 Interchange) and SLEX/C5 from 40 minutes to 10 minutes
- Will benefit 42,000 motorists per day

**Milestone accomplishment: Segment 2 (CAVITEX C5 Link Sucat Interchange) inaugurated on June 21, 2024**

\*Also known as the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway

Photo Credit and Sources: DPWH and TRB

Figure 1.20 Inter-Island Linkage Bridge Program\*

ONGOING CONSTRUCTION      ONGOING PRE-CONSTRUCTION WORKS\*\*

**Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge (BCIB) (32.15 km)**




- Timeline: 2024 to 2029
- Will reduce the travel time between Bataan and Cavite from five hours to 45 minutes



**Panay-Guimaras-Negros Island Bridges (32.47 km)\*\*\***







- Timeline: 2025 to 2031
- Will reduce the travel time between Panay Island and Negros Island from three to four hours to one hour

**Panguil Bay Bridge (3.17 km)**

- 91.5% accomplished
- Timeline: 2020 to October 2024
- Will reduce the travel time between Tubod, Lanao del Norte and Tangub City, Misamis Occidental from two hours and 30 minutes to seven minutes

**Malassa-Lupa Pula Bridge (0.68 km)**

- Timeline: 2022 to 2027
- Will reduce the travel time between Tawi-Tawi mainland and Bongao from one hour to less than 10 minutes



**Panglao-Tagbilaran City Offshore Bridge Connector (2.71 km)**




- Timeline: 2018 to 2029
- Will reduce the travel time during peak hours between Tagbilaran City seaport and Panglao Island from 45 minutes to 15 minutes

**Samal Island-Davao City Connector (4.01 km)**






- Timeline: 2024 to 2027
- Will reduce the travel time between Samal Island and Davao City from 55 minutes to 4.5 minutes

**Three Tawi-Tawi Bridges**

**Tongsinah-Paniongan Bridge (0.57 km)**




**4<sup>th</sup> Cebu-Mactan Bridge (3.34 km) and Mandaue Coastal Road (5.34 km)**


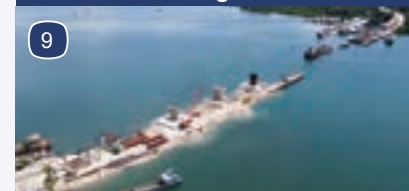
- Timeline: 2025 to 2030
- Will reduce the travel time during peak hours between the Mactan-Cebu International Airport and Cebu Port Area from 45 minutes to 25 minutes

**2<sup>nd</sup> San Juanico Bridge (2.60 km)**




- Timeline: 2028 to 2030
- Will provide alternate route and respond to increasing transportation and logistics demand of Samar and Leyte

**Guicam Bridge (1.21 km)**

- 72.4% accomplished
- Timeline: 2021 to December 2024
- Will reduce the travel time between Olutanga Island and mainland Zamboanga Sibugay from one hour to three to five minutes

**Nalil-Sikkiat Bridge (0.54 km)**




\*Timelines refer to the construction schedule.

\*\*Refers to the conduct of feasibility study, detailed engineering design, and procurement, among others

\*\*\*Covers two bridges crossing Panay-Guimaras (13.00 km) and Guimaras-Negros Island (19.47 km)

Photo Credit and Source: DPWH



**Pursued the Inter-Island Linkage Bridge Program.** Along with the development of essential roads, we continue to strengthen inter-island connectivity through the implementation of the Inter-Island Linkage Bridge Program.

With an aggregate length of 89 km, the Inter-Island Linkage Bridge Program involves the construction of 12 bridges that will provide unhampered inter-island and -regional connection nationwide (see *Figure 1.20 for the status of the program*).

Of these bridges, the Panguil Bay Bridge and Guicam Bridge are for completion by October and December 2024, respectively.

Both bridges are expected to support peace and development in Mindanao.

Also included in this program is the BCIB, which will be the longest water-spanning bridge in the Philippines once completed. The BCIB will reduce the travel time between Bataan and Cavite from five hours to 45 minutes. It will also help decongest Metro Manila by enabling travellers and motorists between Bataan and Cavite to by-pass the capital.

### Developed Rail Connectivity<sup>35</sup>

Railways offer great potential in improving mobility as it continues to be one of the cheapest and fastest ways of transporting people and goods. Hence, we are pursuing the completion of ongoing railway projects (see *Table 1.2*).

In July 2023, we inaugurated the 4<sup>th</sup> Generation (4G) Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs)<sup>36</sup> of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1).

**Table 1.2 Status of Key Railway Projects**

Project	Projected Benefits	Construction Rate as of May 2024	Target Completion*
LRT-1 Cavite Extension (L1CE) Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will reduce the travel time between Baclaran, Parañaque City and Bacoor City, Cavite from one hour and 10 minutes to 25 minutes</li> <li>Will benefit 300,000 passengers per day</li> </ul>	73.3%**	Partial Operations: 2024
Metro Rail Transit Line 7 (MRT-7) Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will reduce the travel time between North Avenue, Quezon City and City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan from two to three hours to 35 minutes</li> <li>Will benefit 300,000 passengers per day</li> </ul>	71.0%	Partial Operations: 2025
Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP) Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will reduce the travel time between Valenzuela City and NAIA from one hour and 30 minutes to 41 minutes</li> <li>Will benefit 519,000 passengers per day</li> </ul>	14.5%	Beyond 2028

\*The target full operations of the L1CE and MRT-7 have yet to be finalized.  
 \*\*As of April 2024  
 Source: DOTr

<sup>35</sup> DOTr, June 24 and 27, 2024.

<sup>36</sup> The 4G LRV is a bidirectional train equipped with advanced passenger information systems and a new signalling system, which will greatly enhance overall passenger experience.

As of end-May 2024, there are 19 four-car 4G LRVs servicing the LRT-1. Through these train sets, the LRT-1 was able to accommodate an average of 33,000 additional passengers per day from July 2023 to May 2024.

We are implementing the MMSP. In March 2024, we commenced the tunnelling works for the North Avenue Station to Tandang Sora Station of the MMSP.

Milestone developments were also achieved in the implementation of the NSCR project. We completed the construction of the 14-km viaduct of the Bocaue-Malolos segment of the NSCR in March 2024.

We are pursuing the Subic-Clark-Manila-Batangas Dedicated Rail Corridor. This PhP657.75-billion<sup>37</sup> integrated railway system will seamlessly connect the ports of Subic, Manila, and Batangas with economic zones in Luzon. It is part of various projects that aim to spur growth in the Luzon Economic Corridor (LEC).

### **Pursued Measures to Ease Traffic Congestion in Major Urban Areas<sup>38</sup>**

According to a 2022 study by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), if nothing is done to address traffic congestion in Metro Manila, daily transportation cost may rise from PhP4.9 billion in 2020 to PhP9.4 billion in 2027.

Thus, I have instructed the agencies concerned in traffic management and infrastructure development to undertake comprehensive interventions to reduce traffic congestion in Metro Manila and other urban areas.

I also signed Administrative Order (AO) No. 18<sup>39</sup> on March 25, 2024 to discourage indiscriminate use of sirens and blinkers and ensure a safe and more organized road and traffic environment.

### **Intensified efforts to address traffic congestion in Metro Manila.<sup>40</sup>**

To help decongest our major roads and reduce the travel time around Metro Manila, we are accelerating the implementation of the Metro Manila Logistics Improvement Program (MMLIP), which consists of 11 high-impact bridges<sup>41</sup> (see Figure 1.21 for the status of select projects under the program).



The President spearheads the *Bagong Pilipinas* Town Hall Meeting on Traffic Concerns with the mayors of Metro Manila LGUs and heads of select government offices in San Juan City on April 10, 2024.

Photo Credit: MMDA

37 Estimated cost is subject to change during the project's development stage.

38 Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), June 21, 2024; and DPWH, July 03, 2024.

39 Titled, "Prohibiting Government Officials and Personnel from Using Sirens, Blinkers, and other Similar Signaling or Flashing Devices."

40 DPWH, June 25, 2024 and July 03, 2024; DOTr, June 25, 2024; and MMDA, June 21, 2024.

41 Of these projects, the (i) Binondo-Intramuros Bridge, (ii) Estrella-Pantaleon Bridge, and (iii) Bonifacio Global City-Ortigas Center Link Road were completed during the past administration.

Figure 1.21 **Select Projects under the MMLIP\*****Priority Bridges Crossing the Pasig-Marikina River and Manggahan Floodway Bridges Construction Project****North and South Harbor Bridge****Eastbank-Westbank Bridge 2****Palanca-Villegas Bridge**

- Three bridges with a total length of **3,167.86 meters**
- Will improve the interconnectivity between the areas near the Pasig River and Manggahan Floodway
- Completion by **December 2027**

**Metro Manila Bridges Project****Marcos Highway-St. Mary Ave. Bridge****Homeowners Drive-A. Bonifacio Bridge****Kabayani St.-Matandang Balara Bridge**

- Three bridges crossing Marikina River with a total length of **3,023.60 meters**
- Will alleviate traffic congestion and increase the average vehicle speed by providing alternative routes
- Completion by **September 2029**

**Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project****Guadalupe Bridge****Lambingan Bridge**

- Replacement of outer bridges and substructure including foundation of inner bridge of Guadalupe Bridge (**114.4 meters**)
- Replacement of Lambingan Bridge (**98.1 meters**) with vertical geometry improvement of both sides' approach road
- Will ensure the safety of about **365,000 motorists** who use the Guadalupe Bridge and **30,257 motorists** who pass by Lambingan Bridge daily
- Completion by **July 2027**

*\*All projects are undergoing pre-construction works, such as the conduct of detailed engineering design and procurement of civil works.*

Photo Credit and Source: DPWH

We have also approved the PhP5.2-billion Taguig City Integrated Terminal Exchange project, which is for completion by 2026. It will serve 160,000 passengers and accommodate 4,000 buses daily.

To ease traffic congestion during the day, I have instructed the DPWH and MMDA to reschedule the conduct of road works and activities from day to night.<sup>42</sup> The MMDA is also intensifying its road clearing operations.



The PhP3.25-billion Cagayan de Oro Coastal Road Gusa-Igpit Section lies between Barangay Gusa and Barangay Igpit. It is expected to reduce the travel time between these areas from one hour to 20 minutes.

Photo Credit and Source: DPWH

To ease the traffic situation in Cebu City and nearby areas, we are implementing the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit Project, which is due for completion by 2027.

We are expediting the implementation of the Cagayan de Oro Coastal Road Gusa-Igpit Section. As of May 2024, this road project is more than 90% accomplished and targeted for completion by December 2024.

In Davao City, we inaugurated in July 2023 the Talomo-Matina Bridge under the Davao City Coastal Bypass Road (DCCBR) project. The opening of this road section reduced the travel time between Toril and downtown Davao City from 45 minutes to 15 minutes. The whole DCCBR project is expected to be completed by 2026.

In addition, in February 2024, we signed contracts for the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project. It shall traverse 33 interconnected routes, serving 800,000 passengers per day.



### Road Clearing and Anti-Colorum Accomplishments in Metro Manila

(July 2022 to June 15, 2024)



**65,874**

Illegally parked vehicles apprehended



**20,655**

Illegally parked vehicles impounded



**1,722**

Colorum vehicles apprehended

### Enhanced mobility in urban areas beyond Metro Manila.<sup>43</sup>

In February 2024, we broke ground for the construction of the Ilocos Norte Transport Hub. Targeted for completion by 2025, this project will benefit around 5,000 public transport groups, including drivers and bus operators.

In Negros Occidental, we are constructing the Bacolod-Negros Occidental Economic Highway, which will benefit 20,000 travellers per day once completed in December 2027.

42 The rescheduled road works shall not affect the project timeline and cost.

43 DOTr, June 25, 2024; and DPWH, June 25, 2024.

# Advancing Digital Connectivity across the Country



The President joins DICT Secretary Ivan John Uy and Meta Director of Public Policy for Southeast Asia, Dr. Rafael Frankel, during the grand launch of the National Fiber Backbone (NFB) Project Phase 1 in Pasay City on April 19, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

Universal digital connectivity is important to ensure that no Filipino is left behind in our development.

Anchored on our Build Better More campaign, we are aspiring to achieve a digitally revolutionized Philippines characterized by seamless digital access across cities and the countryside.<sup>44</sup>

## Bolstered Internet Access and Connectivity<sup>45</sup>

**Developed the NFB Project.** Upon its completion in 2026, the NFB will deploy the fiber optic cable and wireless technology required to enhance internet accessibility and speed nationwide.

On April 19, 2024, we launched Phase 1 of the NFB Project (see *Figure 1.22*).

### Figure 1.22 NFB Project Phase 1 Key Facts



#### Project Details

- Spans 1,245 km
- Initial capacity of 600 gigabits per second optical spectrum



#### Beneficiaries

- Provides high-speed internet to approximately 750,000 individuals in Regions I, III, and National Capital Region (NCR)
- Connects two National Government Data Centers
- Supports four BCDA eco-zones



#### Impact on Government Offices

- Empowers 346 national and local government offices through the Government Network
- Estimated annual savings: PhP145 million

Source: DICT

44 DICT, June 28, 2024.

45 DICT, June 28, 2024.

With the operationalization of NFB Project Phase 1, we are now deploying internet to 52 government entities in San Fernando, La Union, and targeting to connect an additional 294 government agencies before the end of 2024.

In January 2024, we started the implementation of NFB Project Phases 2 and 3,<sup>46</sup> which will cover Regions II, IV-A, V, VIII, X, and XI. As of May 31, 2024, Phases 2 and 3 are 45% accomplished.

A building block of the NFB is the Luzon Bypass Infrastructure (LBI), which serves as the former's internet highway capacity.

The LBI is now 100% active with the successful delivery of the spectrum capacity from Los Angeles, California through the Pacific Light Cable Network.

**Implemented the Free Public Internet Access Program (FPIAP).** We are strengthening the FPIAP to ensure that every Filipino is digitally connected regardless of geographical location. As of end-May 2024, we established

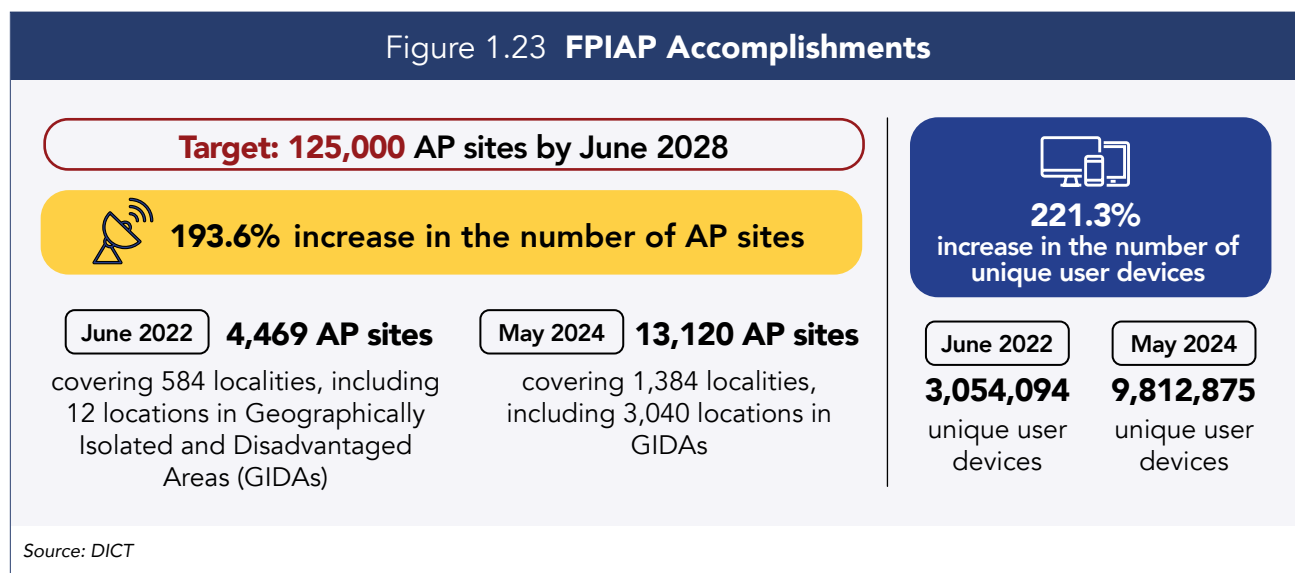
13,120 FPIAP access point (AP) sites in public spaces and state universities and colleges (SUCs) (see Figure 1.23).

**Strengthened Connectivity by Promoting Private Sector Investments<sup>47</sup>**

**Facilitated the operationalization of Starlink.** On February 22, 2023, Starlink went live in the Philippines, marking its first operation in Southeast Asia. Starlink provides up to 220 megabits per second high-speed satellite broadband connectivity. It enables the distribution of bandwidth to rural and other underserved areas in a fast and cost-efficient manner, serving 6.35 million users.

**Constructed common towers.** We are encouraging the private sector's investment in the construction of common towers and its co-location to help pave the way for improved public access and better information and communications technology (ICT) coverage. From 1,337 common towers in 2023, we now have 4,423 common towers across the country as of May 2024.

Figure 1.23 FPIAP Accomplishments



46 Phases 2 and 3 will span 1,781 km with 31 nodes. Both phases are targeted for completion in December 2024.  
 47 DICT, June 28, 2024.

## Developed ICT Capacity<sup>48</sup>

We are enhancing the Technology for Education, Employment, Entrepreneurs, and Economic Development (Tech4ED) Project.

Under this project, the Tech4ED Centers serve as hubs for delivering various government services and capacity development resources related to digital literacy, cybersecurity, data science, MSME content, finance, agricultural technologies, and the *Tekno-Aklatan* platform.

We increased the number of Tech4ED Centers across the country from 4,969 as of June 2022 to 5,012 as of May 2024.

As part of our vision to attain a fully digital nation, we are optimizing the use of the internet and available digital technologies to bring the government closer to the people (see *Chapter 7*).

Also, recognizing that threats accompany our shift to more digital transactions and interactions, we are embarking on a comprehensive effort to ensure cybersecurity in the country (see *Chapter 5*).



Participants explore mobile robotics at the Tech4ED Center in Palawan in April 2024.

*Photo Credit: DICT*



## Accomplishments in ICT Capacity Building (July 2022 to May 2024)

### Tech4ED



**573**

digital literacy training sessions conducted with 32,798 participants



**5,012**

Tech4ED Centers established

### Digital Workforce through the ICT Academy Program



**943**

ICT training sessions conducted, with 90,457 government employees trained

### Strengthening the Philippine Workforce through the Adaptive and Responsive Digital Knowledge Initiative



**191**

ICT technical training sessions conducted, with 5,182 individuals from the marginalized sectors trained



**1,466**

ICT technical skills trainees secured online jobs

### ICT Workforce Upskilling and Reskilling Project



**467**

individuals awarded industry-accepted certifications in the Animation and Shared Services Sector

# Way Forward

To advance the Philippines' economic transformation and growth, we are strengthening our economic foundation. We are likewise swinging our doors even wider for high-value investments focusing on broad-based job creation as well as the expansion of transportation and digital infrastructure. We expect these investments to result in higher economic activity, more quality jobs, and more importantly, a better life for all Filipinos.

We remain committed to attaining an "A" level credit rating. This would affirm the country's credit worthiness and, in turn, this will increase investment and eventually help us achieve our sustainable development goals (SDGs).

We are strengthening our efforts to improve the collection of revenues by ensuring ease of paying taxes, accelerating digitalization programs, improving non-tax revenue collections, and pushing for the privatization of government assets that will lead to operational efficiency and higher investment returns.

The government is also pursuing revenue-generating and fiscal reform measures, such as:

- Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy (CREATE MORE);
- Package 4 of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program;
- Excise tax on single use plastics;
- Motor vehicle users' tax;
- Value-added tax (VAT) on digital service providers; and

- Rationalization of the Mining Fiscal Regime.

Our policy environment remains primed for heightened investment activities in the country with the enactment of the PPP Code and the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF). Thus, along with the priority legislative reforms and the investment pledges, we are looking forward to the realization of high-quality investments that would provide more jobs to our people.

We are working to complete and implement various trade agreements to further diversify our markets, encourage more investments, and create more opportunities for our people.

We are employing a whole-of-nation approach to position the Philippines as an ideal investment destination. We are working together to achieve the goals under the MSME Development Plan and ensure that our local businesses, especially MSMEs, are equipped with the necessary tools to help them flourish and be competitive in the global market.

For tourism, we are promoting a wider range of attractions and developing sustainable tourism practices to attract a more diverse set of tourists and visitors. We are strengthening our partnership with the private sector, local governments, and communities to develop more tourism opportunities particularly at the grassroots level, leading to a wider range of economic possibilities in these areas.



Our vision is to provide our people with an efficient, accessible, inclusive, and highly connected transportation system. Thus, this administration continues to implement transportation projects—from roads, bridges, to mass transit systems. These projects will propel the economy and, more importantly, raise the overall well-being of every Filipino.

We are maximizing the full potential of PPPs and government private sector cooperation. We continue to be hopeful of the fruition of several infrastructure projects under the Build Better More program.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to build better more. We aspire that the projected benefits of our transportation programs and projects will be felt soon by all Filipinos.

Ensuring seamless digital connectivity across the country is important in driving socio-economic growth. However, we acknowledge that we need to do more, especially in improving internet speed and accessibility and public service efficiency. We are working to further boost our digital connectivity to achieve our vision of a fully digital *Bagong Pilipinas*.

At the core of all our measures to achieve high economic growth performance is to create more opportunities that will ensure a comfortable life for every Filipino. We are committed to achieving a more dynamic and competitive economy that will lift 14 million Filipinos out of poverty.

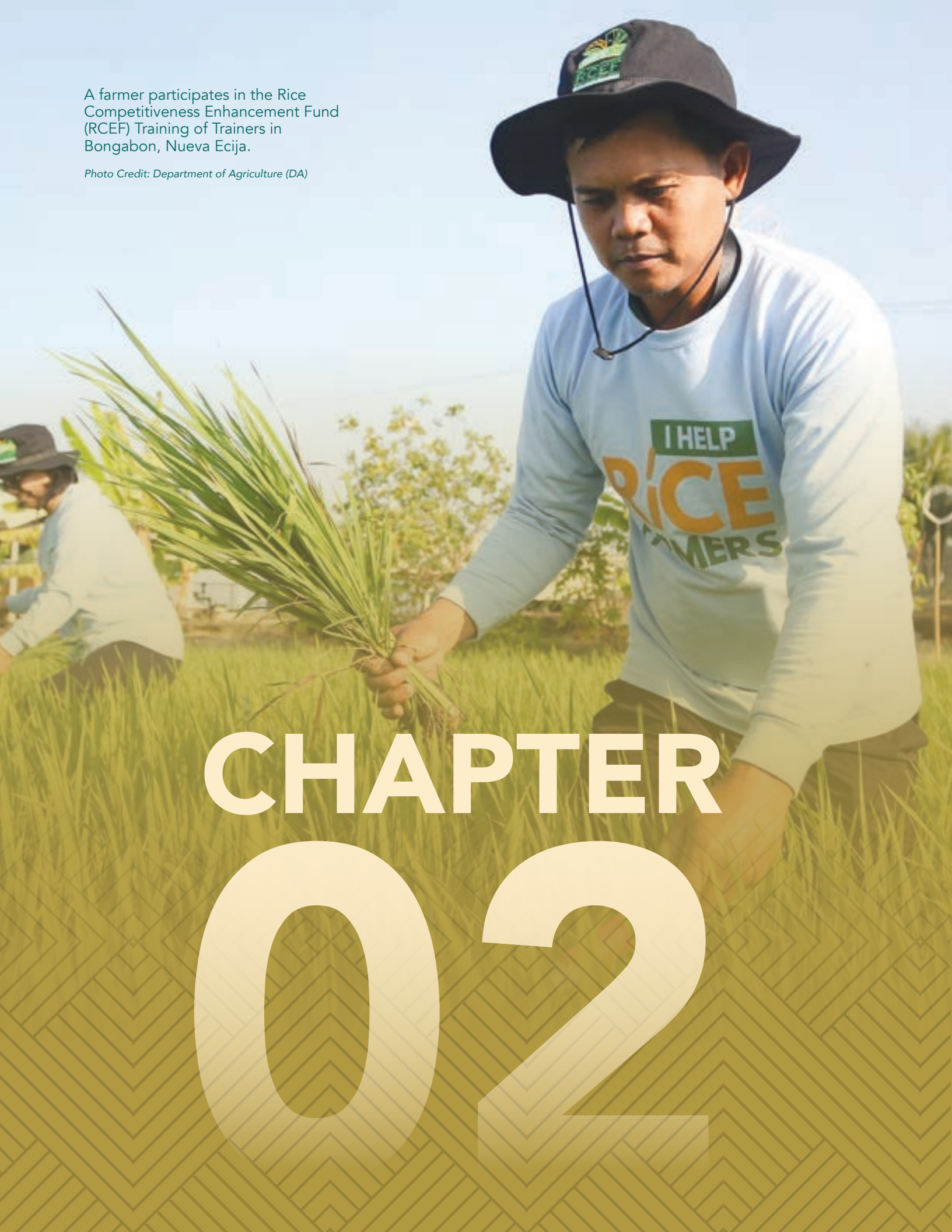


The President leads the launching of the *Bagong Pilipinas* campaign in Manila on January 28, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

A farmer participates in the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) Training of Trainers in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija.

*Photo Credit: Department of Agriculture (DA)*



# CHAPTER

# 02

# Ensuring Food and Water Security

Agriculture and water security play paramount roles in ensuring food security and promoting health among the population, which are critical components of development and nation building.

Hence, we are investing heavily in modernizing our agriculture and fisheries sector to increase production and ensure sufficient supply of affordable food for all. We are also capacitating our farmers and looking after their welfare to ensure that they will benefit from the fruits of their labor.

Meanwhile, we are implementing new strategies to better manage our water resources for future generations. One of these strategies aims to lessen the destruction caused by water such as floods, while at the same time, putting its benefits into better economic use—irrigation, power, and potable water.

After two consecutive years of contraction in 2020 and 2021, the agriculture sector grew modestly by 0.5% in 2022.



The President and DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. inspect a rice field during the Ceremonial Palay Harvesting and Distribution of Various Assistance in Candaba, Pampanga on February 03, 2024.

Photo Credit: DA

“

*Ang inyong mga kamay—na masigasig na nagbubungkal ng lupang inyong sinasaka—ang siyang nagbibigay ng buhay at sigla sa ating sambayanan. At ang bawat butil ng palay na inyong tinatanim ang siyang tutubo at magsisilbing haligi ng ating mas matatag at mas masaganang bukas.”*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
Ceremonial Palay Harvesting and  
Distribution of Various Assistance  
February 03, 2024

Moreover, the sector's full-year growth in 2023 has equaled pre-pandemic levels at 1.2%. This positive development brings the government closer to its growth target of 1.8% to 3.3%, as outlined in the PDP 2023-2028.<sup>49</sup>

However, there are many challenges that we need to overcome, and the results of our interventions to achieve a truly food-secure Philippines will take time.

The Philippines' ranking in the Global Food Security Index slightly declined from 64<sup>th</sup> in 2021 to 67<sup>th</sup> in 2022.<sup>50</sup>

Global supply disruptions and the effects of climate change continue to affect our agriculture sector. Food inflation increased from 1.6% in January 2022 to 11.2% in January 2023. Starting August 2023, rice started to become a main driver of inflation. In May 2024, rice inflation decelerated for the second consecutive month. However, rice still accounted for more than half of the headline inflation, contributing 2.0 percentage points.<sup>51</sup>

In response to these challenges, we increased government investment in agriculture development. The agriculture and fisheries, and agrarian reform sectors received PhP235 billion in FY 2024, including PhP114.28 billion for the DA and PhP8.58 billion for the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). This is a huge increase from the PhP186 billion allocation in the FY 2023 budget. For 2025, we are proposing a budget that would further allow the DA to modernize the agriculture and fisheries sector.<sup>52</sup>

This Administration aims to translate these financial resources into interventions that would increase production, lower production costs, reduce losses, improve sector's competitiveness, increase the income of farmers and fisherfolk, and lower food prices.

Our investments in credit and insurance and capacity building would likewise improve the productivity of farmers and fisherfolk. We are also strengthening the capacities of agencies against man-made threats such as smuggling and illegal agricultural practices to foster a level playing field for all stakeholders.

All these efforts are geared toward improving the welfare of our farmers and fisherfolk and providing an adequate supply of food for all Filipinos under a *Masaganang Bagong Pilipinas*.



A fisherman fixes his fishing gear at one of the fish cages in Laguna de Bay.

Photo Credit: DA

49 NEDA, June 25, 2024.

50 DA, June 27, 2024.

51 NEDA, June 25, 2024.

52 DBM, June 26, 2024.

# Modernizing the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector



A farmer uses a mechanical transplanter for faster and more efficient rice seedling transplanting in Midsayap, Cotabato.

Photo Credit: DA

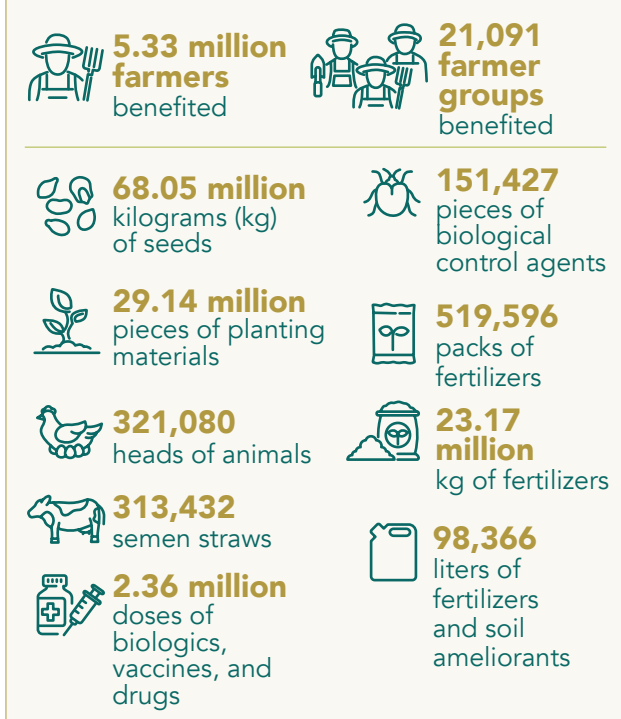
We are focusing on capacitating farmers and fisherfolk by promoting the use of modern technologies, advanced farming practices, and efficient mechanization strategies to assure them of productive harvests and optimal yield at an affordable cost.

## Boosted Local Production Through Responsive Support Services<sup>53</sup>

**Provided productivity-enhancing support services.** We provided our farmers and fisherfolk with essential farm inputs. These include high-quality inbred and hybrid seeds, vaccines, farm supplies, and other inputs provided through various DA Banner Programs<sup>54</sup> (see Figure 2.1).

**Fertilizer.** To ease the financial burden of farmers amid the increase in the costs of inputs, we implemented the Fertilizer Discount Voucher (FDV) Program.

Figure 2.1 **Production Support Provided to Farmers**  
(July 2022 to March 2024)



Source: DA

<sup>53</sup> DA, June 27, 2024 and July 2, 2024.

<sup>54</sup> The DA Banner Programs include the National Rice, Corn, Organic Agriculture, Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture, Livestock, and High-Value Crops Development Programs.



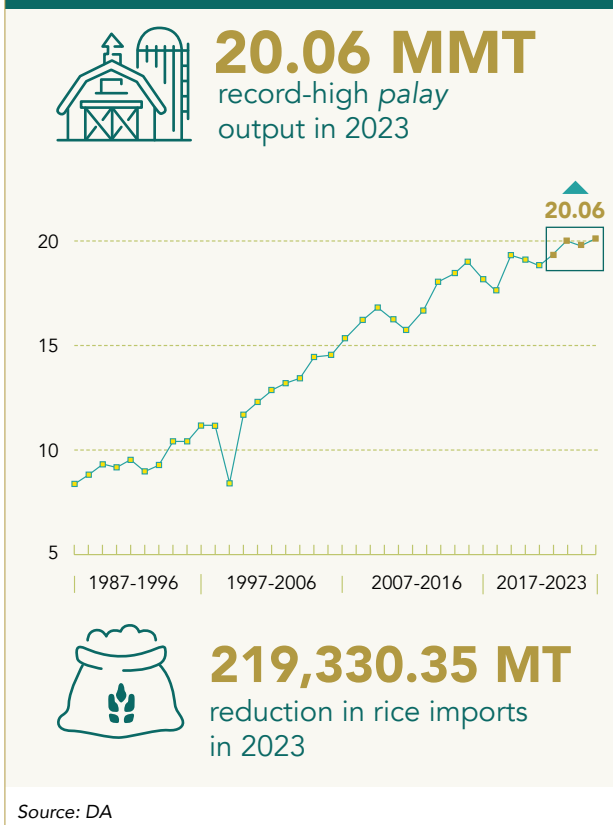
*Mabigat ang bunga, puro maganda ang suwi at tindig ng nakuha kong binhi sa RCEF. Naka-ani ako ng 117 kaban sa isang ektarya, mas marami ng 5-9 na kaban kumpara dati.”*

Sonny Labarinto  
Farmer  
RCEF Beneficiary  
Victoria, Tarlac

The FDV program has been instrumental in the attainment of a record-high *palay* output of 20.06 million metric tons (MMT) in 2023, the highest-ever rice harvest (see Figure 2.2). This also contributed to a 1.3% increase in *palay* yield from 4.11 metric tons (MT) per hectare (ha) in 2022 to 4.17 MT/ha; and a 5.7% reduction in rice import volume from 3.83 MMT in 2022 to 3.61 MMT in 2023. For four cropping seasons from 2022 to 2024, we distributed PhP15.89 billion worth of vouchers.

**Fuel.** The Fuel Discount for Farmers and Fisherfolk Program provides fuel discounts to beneficiaries who own and use machineries for corn production or motorized boats for fishing. Eligible corn farmers and fisherfolk received a fuel subsidy worth PhP3,000 each, which they can use at participating gas stations

Figure 2.2 **Philippines' Record-High Palay Output in 2023**



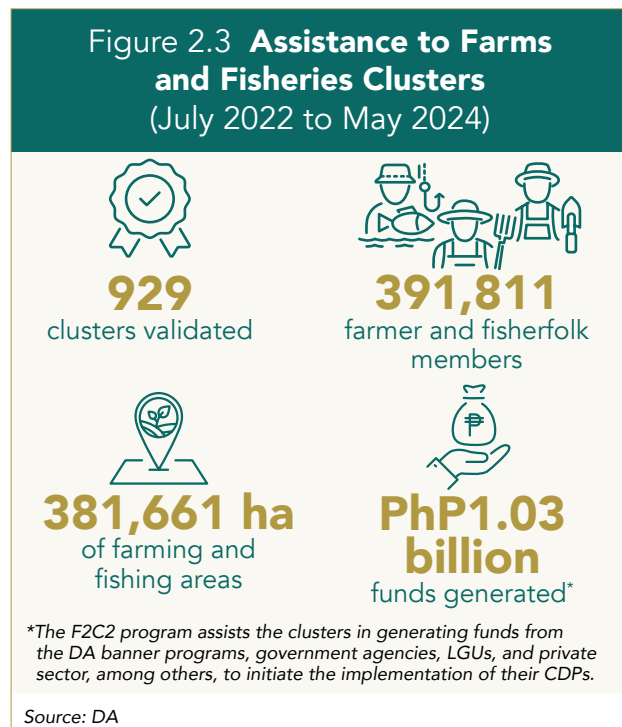
accredited by the Department of Energy (DOE). As of June 17, 2024, 187,187 beneficiaries received fuel assistance through vouchers.

**Implemented the Contract Farming Program.** Under this program, we aim to provide farmers with access to credit, suppliers, market information, and a guaranteed market for their produce. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) signed memoranda of agreement (MOAs) with several Irrigators Associations (IAs), groups, and service cooperatives. For the contracted cropping season, the IAs were provided with a maximum amount of PhP50,000 per ha worth of farm inputs and cash in two tranches. The first tranche shall cover land preparation, while the second tranche shall cover harvesting. Farmers shall receive compensation based on the volume of delivered *palay*.

From January to May 2024, the NIA executed agreements with 650 IAs covering 37,400 ha. With this, we are expecting to harvest 186,000 MT of *palay* by August to December 2024. We also released PhP2 billion for capital to cover farm inputs and hired labor, and PhP1 billion to cover postharvest operations. By the end of 2024, we plan to engage 745 IAs to cover 40,000 ha.

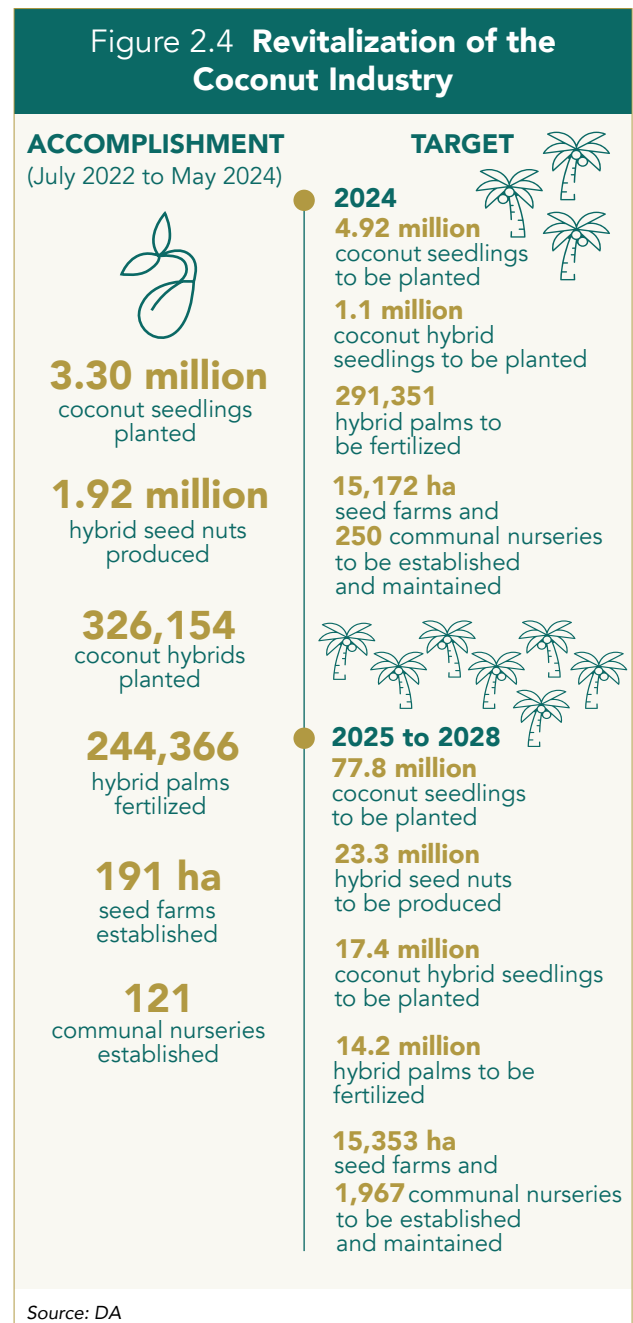
**Reinforced the clustering and consolidation of farms and fisheries.**

To further provide our farmers and fisherfolk with access to government interventions and increase their participation in the value chain, we encouraged small farmers and fisherfolk to pool their resources and consolidate into community business enterprises through the Farm and Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation (F2C2) Program. We trained 2,200 clusters and assisted them in generating PhP1.03 billion in funds from various potential funding sources for the implementation of their Cluster Development Plans (CDPs) (see Figure 2.3).



**Revitalized the coconut industry.**

Through the Coconut Hybridization Program and the Massive Coconut Planting and Replanting Program, we embarked on an upscaled initiative to develop new coconut trees and replace senile ones including those destroyed by typhoons or other natural calamities. Since 2022, we have managed to increase the number of coconut bearing trees by 1.46% from 340 million to 345 million in 2023, and we shall further increase this in the coming years (see Figure 2.4).



We also aim to reintroduce a combination of common salt (CS) and precision fertilization to accelerate coconut growth and productivity. A 2.0 kg per tree per year of CS fertilizer is estimated to give a net return of PhP46,338.63 to PhP95,740.65. These endeavors are part of our strategies to reclaim our position as a leading exporter of coconut products in the global market.



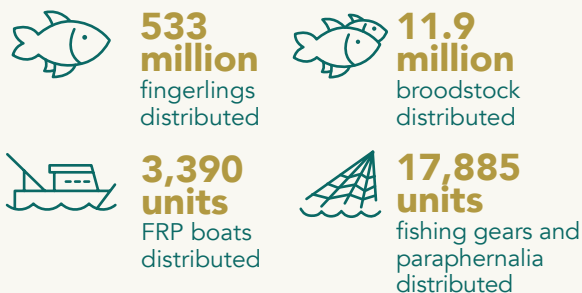
Coconut seed nuts are made ready for distribution in Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental.

Photo Credit: DA

**Developed the aquaculture and fisheries sector.** To increase fish yield and minimize fish importation, we provided 108,399 individuals and 3,548 fisherfolk groups with fingerlings, broodstock, fishing gears, and fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) boats, from July 2022 to May 2024 (see Figure 2.5).

**Fisheries Management Areas as Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZs).** On March 11, 2024, I issued AO No. 16 directing the DA, in collaboration with relevant agencies to identify SAFDZs. This initiative aims to protect fisherfolk's rights, conserve fishery resources, and optimize SAFDZs for agricultural and agro-industrial development.

Figure 2.5 **Support Services Provided to Fisherfolk**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



Source: DA

**Legislated hatcheries.**<sup>55</sup> To address challenges in fish farming such as limited species and varieties and high fry cost, we facilitated the construction of 19 legislated hatcheries, bringing the total number of constructed legislated hatcheries to 31, out of the 57 sites identified. We intend to complete the construction of 12 additional legislated hatcheries by 2024.

### Box 2.1 Mangrove Crab Hatchery-Nursery Facility

To produce and sustain a consistent supply of mangrove crab seedstocks, we inaugurated the Mangrove Crab Hatchery-Nursery Facility in Buguey, Cagayan on April 18, 2024. The **PhP13-million facility is expected to produce 480,000 crablets annually.** Buguey town is a source of giant mangrove crabs supplied to high-end restaurants and exported abroad.



Photo Credit and Source: DA

55 It aims to meet local requirements for aquaculture seed stocks, reduce dependence on imported fry, augment the production of the aquaculture sector, increase the variety of cultivable species in the country, promote species diversification, and provide a venue for fisheries extension services. There are 57 multi-species hatcheries and aquaculture facilities to be constructed nationwide under 41 RAs legislated during the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Congresses.

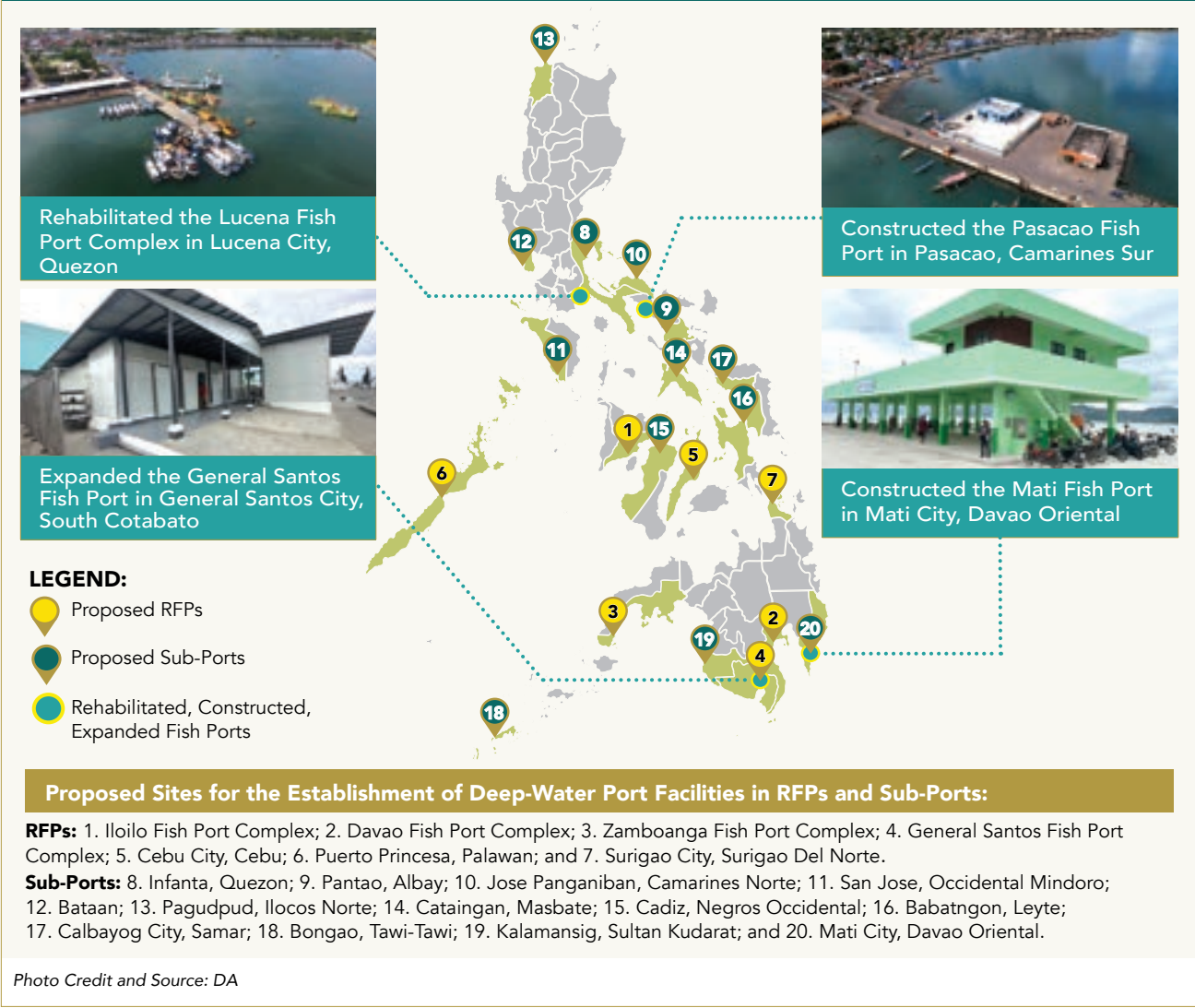


**Fish ports.** We established and operationalized fish ports and fish markets to help decrease postharvest losses and increase supplies of aquatic products. We plan to rehabilitate six regional fish ports (RFPs) in Zamboanga, Iloilo, Davao, Camarines Sur, Pangasinan, and Navotas City. We are working toward the establishment of deep-water port facilities in seven existing and proposed RFPs and 13 proposed sub-ports that will significantly improve food logistics in the country (see Figure 2.6).

**Salt industry.** The country’s once thriving salt industry has been neglected, making us heavily reliant on imports to meet our annual demand.<sup>56</sup>

To revitalize and strengthen domestic salt production, lower importation, and empower local salt producers, I signed RA No. 11985 or the Philippine Salt Industry Development Act on March 11, 2024.

**Figure 2.6 Fisheries Infrastructure Constructed, Rehabilitated, and Expanded and Proposed Sites for the Establishment of Deep-Water Port Facilities (July 2022 to May 2024)**



56 According to the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, 93% of the country’s annual salt demand is imported from countries such as Australia and China, while only 7% is locally produced.



Salts infused with umami flavor from seagrapes, tiger prawn shrimp heads, and shiitake mushrooms win gold awards at the Seoul International Invention Fair in November 2023 and the 49<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition of Inventions held in Geneva in April 2024.

Photo Credit: DOST

**Seaweed.**<sup>57</sup> The country pioneered the cultivation of red seaweeds, particularly *Kappaphycus*.<sup>58</sup> The Philippines was recognized as the top seaweed producer in the international market as a result of our efforts to develop the industry.<sup>59</sup>



A seaweed farmer processes the harvested seaweeds in Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur. She is a member of the People Unite to Guard Aqua Marine Wealth, Inc. who benefited from the Seaweeds Production and Marketing project.

Photo Credit: DA

To support the seaweed industry, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development established a Seaweed Research and Development Center (SeaRDeC) in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

It aims to optimize the seaweed value chain in Tawi-Tawi and create and promote a commercially sustainable cultivated seaweed industry in the BARMM. The SeaRDeC has propagated 25,528 farmed and wild seaweeds. It aims to distribute at least 3,000 kg of feedstocks to seaweed farmers by 2028.

### Intensified Investments in Farm Mechanization and Technological Innovation<sup>60</sup>

To propel the modernization of the Philippine agriculture and fisheries sector, we invested in the mechanization of our farms and fisheries. We also pursued the digitalization of our services, as well as the development and use of other advanced technologies and practices.



RCEF machineries are prepared for turnover during the Distribution of Various Government Assistance in Oriental Mindoro on November 27, 2023.

Photo Credit: DA

**Expedited the provision of farm machineries.** For 2024, we allocated PhP10.82 billion for the provision of farm machineries and equipment to increase land productivity, minimize postharvest losses, and increase farmers' and fisherfolk's

57 DOST, June 25, 2024; and DA, June 27, 2024.

58 A group of red seaweeds that are sources of carrageenan or a group of red seaweeds processed to extract carrageenans, an ingredient for cosmetics, food processing, and industrial manufacturing, (Source: DOST, June 25, 2024).

59 National Seaweed (*Kappaphycus*) Industry Roadmap 2022-2026, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), 2021.

60 DA, June 27, 2024 and July 05, 2024.

income and competitiveness. This includes the PhP5 billion allocation under RCEF. From July 2022 to June 2024, we distributed 42,396<sup>61</sup> production-related and postharvest machineries and equipment to 9,263 Farmers Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs). These machineries are used for land preparation, crop establishment, harvesting, threshing, drying, and milling, among others.



*...Ang pinaka-gamit nako na mga apps karon ay ang Leaf Color Computing app, kay dako kaayo kini nga tabang... Sa akoang mga kauban sa training karon, ug sa mga kauban nato nga farmers, musabay kita sa dagan sa pagbag-o sa panahon..."*

*...The app that I mostly use is Leaf Color Computing, as it is very helpful... I encourage all farmers to adapt to the change of times and technology...*

Mervyn Saraspi  
Rice Farmer  
Digital Farmers Program Beneficiary  
Bansalan, Davao del Sur

We also distributed 5,643 farm machineries and equipment worth PhP770.04 million to 1,604 Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARB) organizations from July 2022 to June 15, 2024.<sup>62</sup>

To produce high-quality seeds and planting materials, we constructed 4,245 production facilities, including community and school gardens, greenhouses, rain shelters, seed storage, and nurseries. We also built 229 postharvest and processing facilities, such as multi-purpose drying pavements, warehouses, and cold storage. These facilities benefited 4,178 farmer groups from July 2022 to March 2024.

**Developed and adopted digital technology in agriculture.** To improve the delivery of services to farmers enrolled in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA),<sup>63</sup> we implemented the Interventions Monitoring Cards (IMC) digitalization program. The IMC serves as an e-wallet for farmers, which allows them to avail of government interventions. From July 2022 to May 31, 2024, 1.17 million RSBSA-registered beneficiaries were provided with various assistance through the IMC.

To pave the way for "Agriculture 4.0,"<sup>64</sup> we are working toward providing farmers and agriculture and fisheries stakeholders with information for data-driven decision-making using digital databases. We launched the D4AgPH to provide farmers an online platform for Digital Agricultural Tools and Services (DATS). Currently, there are 67 active DATS.

61 Include machineries distributed under various DA banner programs and the RCEF.

62 DAR, June 24, 2024.

63 It is the centralized database of farmers and fisherfolk in the country that supports various levels of planning and decision-making across the DA.

64 It is an information-driven farming approach that taps digital technology to improve farm productivity while lowering the costs of inputs significantly.

On February 02, 2024, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) launched the Farm Tech under the Digital Farmers Program (DFP). Farm Tech provides portable training and livelihood resources for farming communities, especially in hard-to-reach areas. The package includes a utility bag, tablet, smartphones, Wi-Fi, projector, portable sound system, flash drives, DFP training modules and other agri-related information, education, and communication (IEC) materials.

**Promoted other innovative and sustainable farming technologies.** From July 2022 to May 2024, the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) developed two climate-resilient rice varieties, namely, *Salinas 39* and *Sahod Ulan 37*.



### New Crop Varieties and Technologies

#### NSIC Rc 686 (*Salinas 39*)



- Recommended in saline prone irrigated lowland areas
- Early maturing
- Resistant to blast, whitehead, and bacterial leaf blight
- Maximum yield 4.2 tons (t)/ha

#### NSIC Rc 732 (*Sahod Ulan 37*)

- Recommended in national rainfed lowland areas
- Early maturing
- Resistant reaction to rice tungro virus, bacterial leaf blight, sheath blight, brown planthopper, and green leafhopper
- Maximum yield 6.98 t/ha



From July 2022 to March 2024, we developed 132 technologies through the implementation of research for development projects. These projects aim to enhance the productivity of crops and fisheries, develop mechanisms to control pests and diseases, and automate farming applications and technologies for data-driven and efficient farming practices. In the same period, we developed five farm and postharvest mechanization technologies, namely: (i) abaca stripping machine; (ii) rubber crepe machine; (iii) *palay* pre-cleaner; (iv) improved coffee moisture meter; and (v) handheld copra moisture meter through the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization.

We institutionalized the Science for the Convergence of Agriculture and Tourism program/project to transform ordinary farms into science-based farm tourism enterprises. It serves as a venue for awareness, information dissemination, technology transfer, and skills development for visitors and clients. As of April 2024, we promoted packages of technologies to 47,671 tourists, farmers, students, and other clients.<sup>65</sup>

### Strengthened the Development of Irrigation Systems<sup>66</sup>

The declining irrigation water supply due to droughts is a serious concern that the country is facing. To address this problem, we upgraded our irrigation systems to ensure that crops thrive, especially in areas with erratic rainfall.

65 DOST, June 25, 2024.

66 DA, June 27, 2024.

We also invested in renewable energy-driven irrigation systems in regions where dam construction is not feasible. As of December 2023, we developed 2.16 million ha of service area, or 68.88% of the country's estimated 3.13 million ha of total irrigable area (see Figure 2.7).

### Box 2.2 Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project-Stage II, North Cotabato

Inaugurated on April 29, 2024, this multipurpose dam project diverts water from the Maridagao River to irrigate **9,528 ha** of farmland in Pikit and Aleosan in Cotabato Province, and Pagalungan and Datu Montawal in Maguindanao. The dam benefited **4,043 farming families** including former Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) combatants.



Photo Credit and Source: DA



The Cabaruan Solar-Powered Pump Irrigation Project provides irrigation to 350 ha of rice fields. It is one of the country's first and biggest solar-powered irrigation projects. Located in Quirino, Isabela, it was inaugurated on June 10, 2024.

Photo Credit: NIA

## Figure 2.7 Completed Irrigation Projects



### National and Communal Irrigation Systems (NIS/CIS)

(as of December 31, 2023)

- **262** NIS completed
- **10,534** CIS completed
- **1.7 million ha** of total service areas developed
- **1.2 million** farmers benefited



### Small-Scale Irrigation Projects (SSIPs)

(July 2022 to March 2024)

- **2,845** SSIPs installed and rehabilitated
- **11,545.44 ha** of new service areas generated
- **2,707 group** beneficiaries



### Solar Power-Driven Irrigation Projects

(July 2022 to May 2024)

- **221 solar power-driven** irrigation projects constructed
- **PhP2.24 billion** worth of solar irrigation projects
- **6,895 farmers** and their families benefited



### DAR Irrigation Projects

(July 2022 to June 15, 2024)

- **54 DAR** irrigation projects turned over
- **1,434 ARBs** benefited

Sources: DA and DAR

# Enhancing the Food Supply Distribution System



The President hands over a sack of rice to a farmer during the Distribution of Rice and Other Government Assistance in Roxas City, Capiz on October 06, 2023.

Photo Credit: DA

Agriculture and fisheries supply chains and networks are essential in allowing producers to access markets. To ensure a steady flow of affordable agricultural goods, we directly connected our farmers to consumers through our KADIWA program. We enhanced the transport and logistics systems that link production areas to markets through our farm-to-market roads (FMRs) and other connectivity projects. These efforts are geared toward making agriculture an industry that is rewarding for our farmers, fisherfolk, and agripreneurs.

## Developed FMRs and Farm-to-Mill Roads<sup>67</sup>

We constructed and rehabilitated FMRs and FMRs with bridges in strategic locations. Meanwhile, farm-to-mill roads were constructed to connect sugarcane farms to sugar mills, bioethanol distilleries, and other processing facilities (see *Figures 2.8 and 2.9*).

To rationalize our investments in FMRs, we adopted the National FMR Network Plan (FMRNP) 2023-2028.

### Figure 2.8 Constructed and Rehabilitated Connectivity Projects (July 2022 to June 2024)



**1,313.70 km\***  
of FMRs



**865.94 linear meters**  
of bridge (FMRs with bridge and bridge projects)



**281,074**  
households/farming communities and  
**23,305 farmers**  
benefited across the country

\*FMRs completed by both the DA and DAR. For the DAR, the completed FMRs cover July 2022 to June 19, 2024.



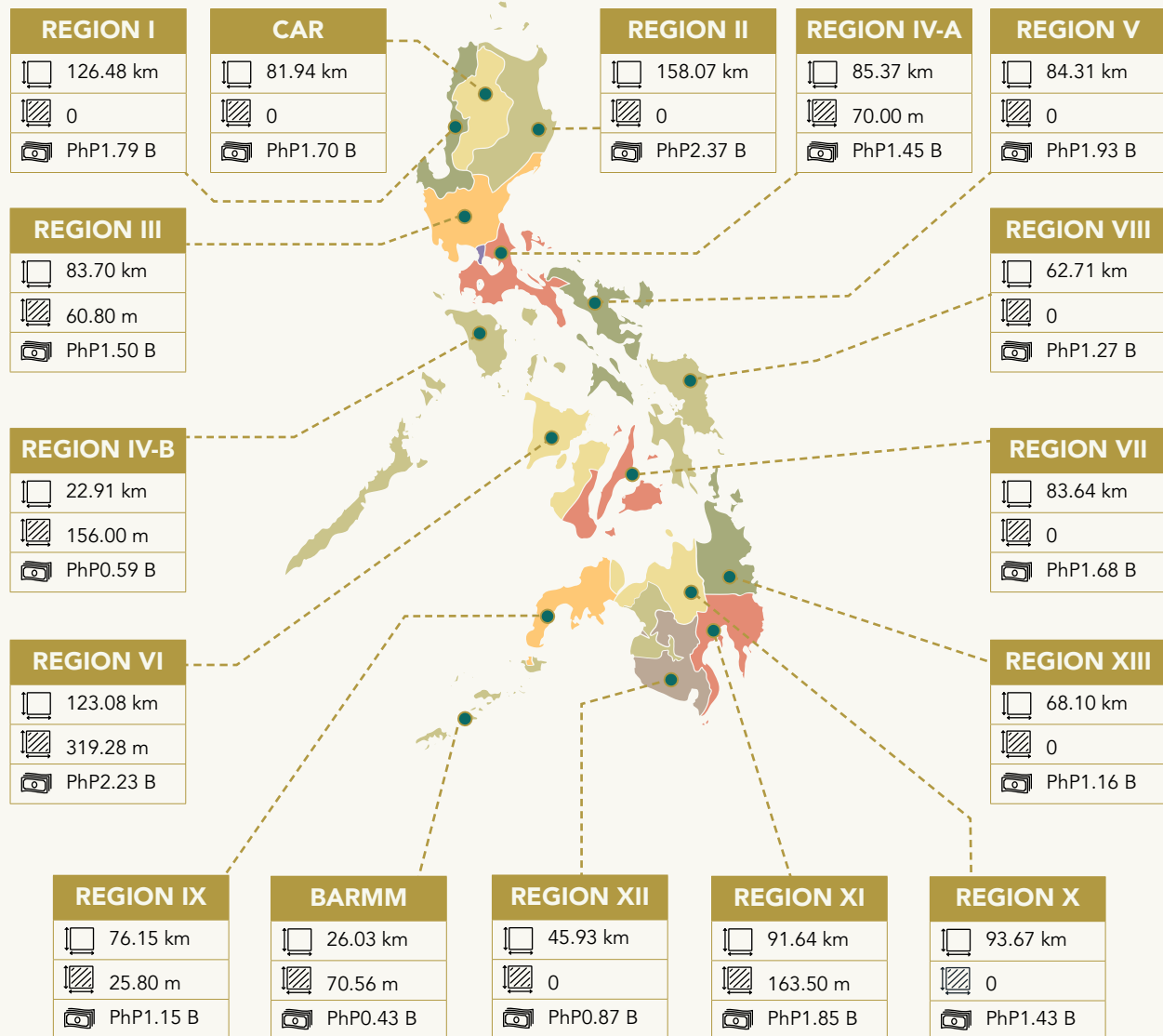
**52,258 ARBs\*\***  
benefited across the country

\*\*Accomplishments cover July 2022 to June 19, 2024.

Sources: DA and DAR

67 DA, June 27, 2024 and July 05, 2024; and DAR, June 24, 2024.

**Figure 2.9 FMRs and Farm-to-Mill Roads Constructed**  
(July 2022 to June 2024)



**LEGEND:**

-  FMRs\* and Farm-to-Mill Roads
-  Bridge component (FMRs with bridge and bridge projects)
-  Budget (in PhP billion)



A two-lane FMR stretches from Brgy. Lumbang Este to Brgy. Marigondon in Cajidiocan, Romblon. It was completed in October 2023.

Photo Credit: DPWH

\*FMRs completed by both the DA and DAR. For the DAR, the completed FMRs cover July 2022 to June 19, 2024.

Sources: DA and DAR

We also suspended the collection of pass-through fees<sup>68</sup> to ensure the efficient movement of goods across regions and reduce the costs of food logistics. All LGUs were prohibited from collecting toll fees and charges from all vehicles transporting goods and merchandise while passing through national roads and other roads that are not constructed and funded by LGUs.<sup>69</sup>



*Kami po ay labis na nasiyahan at nagpapasalamat...na magkaroon ng access road papunta doon sa palayan, kung saan sila [mga magsasaka] ay [dating] nahihirapan tuwing tag-ulan dahil maputik, mahirap magbaba ng kanilang mga produkto.”*

Noriel Alberto  
Barangay Kagawad  
FMR Development Program (FMRDP)  
Beneficiary  
Brgy. Lumbang Este, Cajidiocan, Romblon

## Expanded the Agri-Fishery Market and KADIWA<sup>70</sup>

We continued to upscale and institutionalize our marketing program, the KADIWA *ni Ani at Kita*.<sup>71</sup> This provides a stable and affordable food supply to Filipinos, enables farmers to sell directly to consumers, and reduces market layers (see *Table 2.1*).



### KADIWA Accomplishments

(July 2022 to May 2024)



**262** KADIWA stores established



**2** KADIWA centers operationalized (1) Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Manila and (2) Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority, Las Piñas



**PhP655.61 million**

financial grants awarded to **293 groups** for marketing logistics, retail, and the distribution of agri-fishery commodities



FCAs sell their produce at the KADIWA *ng Pangulo* in Caraga during the *Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo* Fair on March 22 to 23, 2024.

Photo Credit: DA

68 EO No. 41, s. 2023 titled, “Prohibiting the Collection of Pass-through Fees on National Roads and Urging Local Government Units to Suspend the Collection of Any Form of Fees Upon All Types of Vehicles Transporting Goods Under Section 153 or 155 of Republic Act No. 7160 or the “Local Government Code of 1991.”

69 DILG, June 24, 2024.

70 DA, June 27, 2024 and July 2, 2024.

71 Includes KADIWA Retail Selling Activities (i.e., KADIWA Stores, Pop-up Stores, and KADIWA On-Wheels), KADIWA *ng Pasko/Pangulo*, and Seafood KADIWA.



Table 2.1 **KADIWA Program Activities**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)

Program	KADIWA Activities Conducted	Amount of Sales (in PhP million)	Number of Beneficiaries
KADIWA retail selling	10,802	1,545.59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,382 FCAs</li> <li>• 3.98 million households</li> </ul>
KADIWA <i>ng Pangulo</i> (November 2022 to May 2024)	800	150.55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,876 FCAs</li> <li>• 399,586 households</li> </ul>
Seafood KADIWA	952	49.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,727 suppliers (FCAs and traders)</li> <li>• 67,012 consumers</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,554</b>	<b>1,745.33</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>6,985 FCAs and traders</b></li> <li>• <b>4.38 million households</b></li> </ul>

Source: DA

### Box 2.3 Stabilizing Market Prices

We actively monitored the prices and supply of agricultural commodities to prevent sudden surges, ensure the availability of food supply, and protect consumers.

The high price of rice has largely affected Filipino households, especially the underprivileged. On August 31, 2023, I issued **EO No. 39, s. 2023**<sup>72</sup> to cushion consumers from the impact of the surge in retail prices of rice. We set the price ceilings for regular and well-milled rice at **PhP41.00 and PhP45.00** per kg, respectively. We also provided cash support to **34,049 micro-rice retailers and sari-sari store owners** amounting to **PhP510.74 million** to help them recoup their losses.

When the supply of rice stocks increased and the rice prices in the market stabilized, I officially ordered the lifting of the price ceiling through the issuance of **EO No. 42, s. 2023**<sup>73</sup> on October 04, 2023.

To ensure the continuous supply of goods, temper inflation, and protect the purchasing power of Filipinos, I issued **EO No. 62, s. 2024**,<sup>74</sup> which modified the rates of import duty on various products including rice. Under the EO, the in-quota and out-quota tariff rate of rice was reduced from 35% to 15%. The tariff rates shall be subject to periodic review, with the Most-Favored Nation tariff rates for rice subject to review every four months to ensure the responsiveness of our policies to prevailing economic conditions. Meanwhile, consistent with the government's thrust to devote more resources to the agricultural sector, the tariff revenue collection from rice imports will be utilized to strengthen government efforts to boost the productivity and competitiveness of local rice producers.

Sources: NEDA, June 25, 2024; and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), June 26, 2024.

72 Titled, "Imposition of Mandated Price Ceilings on Rice."

73 Titled, "Lifting the Mandated Price Ceilings on Rice under EO No. 39, s. 2023."

74 Titled, "Modifying the Nomenclature and Rates of Import Duty on Various Products."

# Advancing the Welfare of Farmers and Fisherfolk



The Canlupao Farmers Association from Southern Leyte harvests bangus using the BFAR Special Area for Agricultural Development Phase II Cage project on January 26, 2024.

Photo Credit: DA

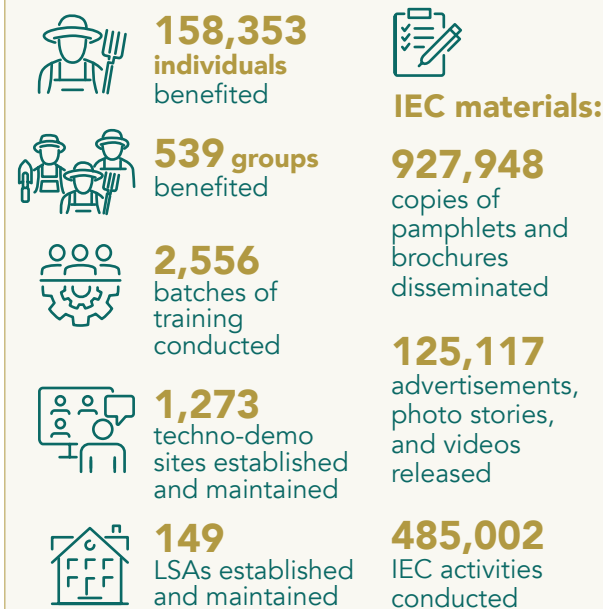
Farmers and fisherfolk are our partners in our journey to attaining food security. Their hard work and dedication in cultivating our land and sea are recognized. Thus, we remain committed to protecting and advancing their welfare.

## Capacitated Farmers and Fisherfolk through Extension Support, Education, and Training<sup>75</sup>


We established Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSAs) and farm schools to equip farmers and fisherfolk with the latest agricultural skills and innovations.

From July 2022 to May 2024, 80 RCEF LSAs were certified and endorsed for Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) farm school accreditation. We also established and maintained 1,273 technology demonstration sites from July 2022 to March 2024. As of May 2024, there are 1,873 ATI-certified LSAs nationwide (see Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10 **Extension, Support, Education, and Training Services**  
(July 2022 to March 2024)



**Training for ARBs** (July 2022 to June 15, 2024)

 **794,791**  
ARBs trained

Sources: DA and DAR

75 DA, June 27, 2024.



A bee farmer shows a bee comb during the hands-on activity of the Training on Stingless Bee Beekeeping at ATI Region X in El Salvador City, Misamis Oriental on February 08, 2024.

Photo Credit: DA

**Increased the capacity of farmers to withstand shocks from disasters and diseases.** We equipped our farmers with the appropriate skills and capabilities to thrive amid El Niño and other calamities. In particular, the DA and other stakeholders nationwide underwent training in the Philippine Rice Information System (PRiSM) project.<sup>76</sup>

The PRiSM aims to aid the DA by providing accurate, timely, and detailed information on rice crop seasonality, area, yield, pest injuries, crop management, and damage assessment. Ultimately, it will result in improved decision-making and planning on concerns related to rice security.

Training on developing and using climate risk maps and local adaptation plans for farming communities under the Climate-Smart Map and Adaptation Plan were also conducted. It provides a guide to local communities to develop their own risk maps and adaptive plans,

which cater to their respective local contexts. This benefited 766 participants from 2023 to May 2024.

### Pursued Genuine Agrarian Reform<sup>77</sup>

In our commitment to serve social justice to landless farmers and farmworkers, we prioritized land distribution alongside the provision of support services.

**Expedited Land Acquisition and Distribution (LAD).** We continued to pursue genuine agrarian reform by further intensifying the distribution of lands to our landless farmers.

By end of 2028, we aim to distribute 223,098 titles covering 267,717 ha to 223,098 ARBs under the regular LAD. Under the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project, we target to distribute 1.06 million titles covering 1.26 million ha to 1.06 million ARBs (see *Table 2.2*).



ARBs show the land titles they received during the Ceremonial Distribution of Land Titles and Support Services in Negros Occidental on April 08, 2024.

Photo Credit: DAR

<sup>76</sup> PRiSM is operated and sustained by DA through the PhilRice, International Rice Research Institute, and its Regional Field Offices.  
<sup>77</sup> DAR, June 24, 2024.

**Table 2.2 Certificate of Land Ownership Award Distribution Accomplishments**  
(July 2022 to June 15, 2024)

Program	Period Covered	No. of Titles Distributed	Area (in ha)	No. of Beneficiaries
Regular LAD	July 2022 to June 2023	25,027	24,733	26,897
	July 2023 to June 15, 2024	23,837	22,820	22,503
	<b>Total</b>	<b>48,864</b>	<b>47,553</b>	<b>49,400</b>
SPLIT	July 2022 to June 2023	(e-titles) 40,390	55,232	35,815
	July 2023 to June 15, 2024	(e-titles) 41,452	54,405	48,114
	<b>Total</b>	<b>81,842</b>	<b>109,637</b>	<b>83,929</b>

Source: DAR



**New Agrarian Emancipation Act (NAEA) and EO No. 40, s. 2023 Accomplishments**  
(July 07, 2023 to June 15, 2024)



**Php57.56 billion**  
amount condoned  
**610,054 ARBs**  
benefited  
**1.17 million ha**  
covered



**Php206.25 million**  
amount subrogated\*  
**10,201 ARBs**  
benefited  
**11,531.24 ha**  
covered

\*The amount assumed by the government through the DAR on behalf of the ARB whose amortization was not covered by the NAEA. The ARB directly negotiated with the land owner for the land reform.



*Daghang salamat nga akong nadawat ang akong titulo nga maoy akong kalipay sa akong pag-uma"*

*I am thankful that I received my [land] title which is my happiness in farming.*

Semion Academia  
101-year-old farmer  
SPLIT Beneficiary  
Negros Oriental

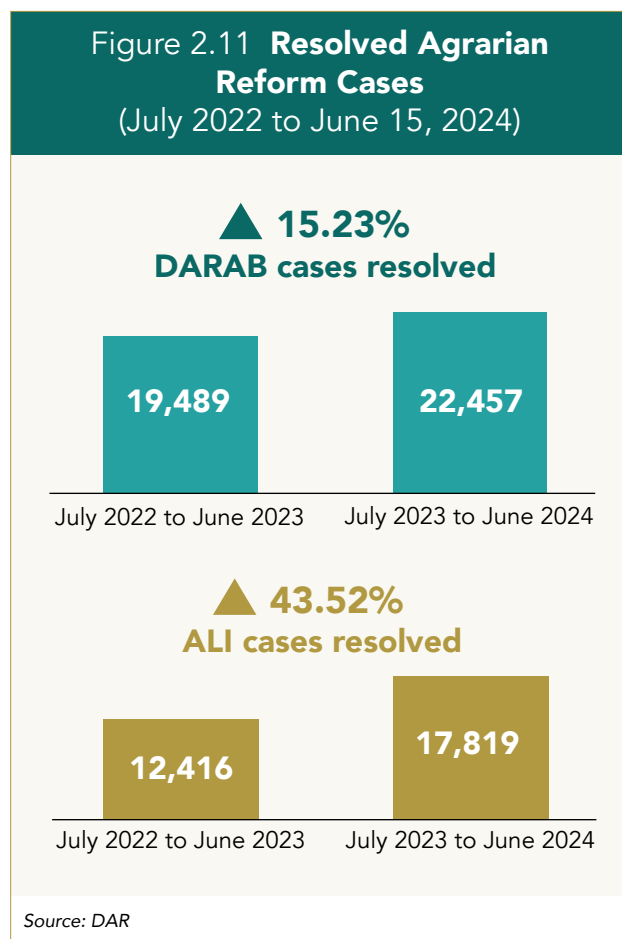
**Established the Condonation Response and Action Desks (CORDs).** Following the enactment of the NAEA,<sup>78</sup> which condones all loans, including interests, penalties, and surcharges incurred by ARBs from the lands awarded to them,

78 In addition, EO No. 40, s. 2023 "Extending the Moratorium on the Payment of the Principal Obligation and Interest of the Amortization Due and Payable by Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries," was signed on September 12, 2023. This extends the moratorium on the payment of the principal value and annual interest of the amortization due and payable by ARBs for a period of two years.

we established 816 CORDs in DAR regional offices nationwide. These centers shall help validate the eligibility of ARBs for the condonation of debt and amortization under the NAEA.

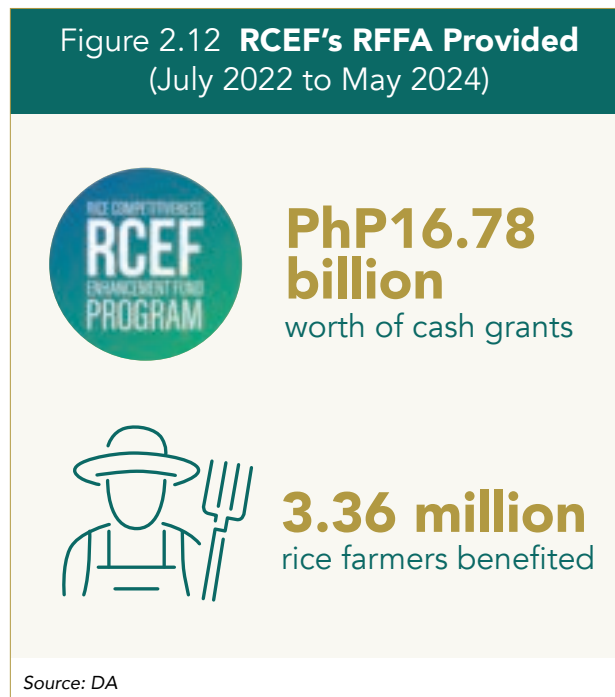
### **Resolved agrarian reform cases.**

We expedited the resolution of cases to deliver agrarian justice so ARBs can get the lands that they deserve. Thus, cases resolved through the DAR Adjudication Board (DARAB) and cases involving Agrarian Law Implementation (ALI) from July 2023 to June 15, 2024 were higher than the cases resolved from July 2022 to June 2023 (see Figure 2.11).



### **Facilitated Access to Sustainable and Effective Financing Services<sup>79</sup>**

**Grants, credit, and insurance.** To protect the livelihood of our farmers and fisherfolk from threats such as drought, typhoons, pests, and diseases, we provided them with cash grants and facilitated their access to loans, credit, and insurance programs. These programs were extended through the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation, Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), Sugarcane Industry Development Act (SIDA) Socialized Credit Program,<sup>80</sup> RCEF's Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RFFA),<sup>81</sup> and RCEF Expanded Rice Credit Assistance. Through these initiatives, farmers were able to start, rebuild, and invest more in new technologies that will increase their productivity, mitigate risks, and recover from losses (see Figures 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14).



<sup>79</sup> DA, June 27, 2028; and DAR, June 24, 2024.

<sup>80</sup> Previously, the SIDA Socialized Credit program only grants assistance to sugarcane farmers with farms having an area of 5 ha. This was expanded to sugarcane farmers who have 10 ha and below.

<sup>81</sup> Section 13, par. 9(a) of RA No. 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law states that RFFA shall be provided as financial assistance to eligible beneficiaries who are legitimate farmers, farmworkers, cooperatives, and associations as compensation for the projected reduction or loss of farm income arising from the tariffication of the quantitative import.

Figure 2.13 **Credit Assistance for Farmers and Fisherfolk**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



**PhP1.75 billion**  
in loans granted to  
**6,147 rice** farmers and  
**131** borrower organizations  
and FCAs



**PhP6.54 billion**  
in loans granted to  
**88,818** farmers and fisherfolk  
**344** FCAs

**PhP2.46 billion**  
in loans available in 2024



July 2022 to April 2024  
SIDA Socialized  
Credit Program

**PhP393 million**  
in loans granted to  
**1,047** sugarcane farmers

**PhP43.5 million**  
in loans available in 2024



**Coconut Farmers and  
Industry Development  
Plan**

**PhP205.56 million**  
credit granted to  
**34 coconut** FCAs



**314,281 ARBs**  
accessed credit and  
microfinance through  
various DAR credit facilities\*

\*Microfinance Capacity Development Program in Agrarian Reform Areas, Accessible Funds for Delivery to ARBs, and Expanded Assistance to Restore and Install Sustainable Enterprises for ARBs and Small Farm Holders Beneficiaries, among others.

Sources: DA and DAR

Figure 2.14 **Insurance Coverage for Farmers and Fisherfolk**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
**PHILIPPINE CROP  
INSURANCE CORPORATION**



**7.51 million**  
farmers and  
fisherfolk assisted

**PhP250.75 billion**  
insurance covered



**4.01 million**  
head of poultry and  
livestock insured



**7,906**  
fishery or aquaculture  
projects insured\*



**22,508**  
non-crop agricultural  
assets insured\*

\*No. of insurance policies issued

**PhP9.27 billion**  
worth of indemnity paid to  
**1.50 million** insured farmers  
and fisherfolk



Source: DA

# Mitigating the Impact of Disasters and Threats



A farmer inspects his dry rice field in Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. The Municipality of Mansalay declared a state of calamity on March 07, 2024 due to the harsh impact of El Niño.

Photo Credit: DA

The agriculture and fisheries sector is vulnerable to diseases, typhoons, droughts, and other calamities and disasters, which were intensified by climate change. The threat of smuggling also continues to rob our farmers of their income and our government of revenues that should have been used for the development of the agriculture and fisheries sector.

In 2023, the sector incurred PhP24.44 billion in damage and losses due to climate-related disasters, pests and diseases, and oil spills, among others.

To reduce the impact of hazards on our producers and consumers, and minimize disruptions in the value chain, we intensified our support for our farmers and fisherfolk.

## Intensified Efforts to Eradicate African Swine Fever (ASF)<sup>82</sup>

Almost five years after the country's first ASF case was recorded in the province of Rizal in July 2019, the government has successfully reduced the number of barangays with active ASF cases from 5,354 to 32. As of June 07, 2024, there were only 10 provinces<sup>83</sup> with active cases. We achieved this through the implementation of the 1-7-10 protocol.<sup>84</sup>

As of May 2024, 2,904 barangays were released from quarantine and are ready for calibrated repopulation.<sup>85</sup> To complement the efforts in managing ASF outbreaks in the country, we target to distribute safe and efficacious vaccines nationwide.

82 DA, June 27, 2024.

83 Abra, Kalinga, Tarlac, Quezon, Oriental and Occidental Mindoro, Albay, Samar, Misamis Occidental, and Basilan.

84 Under this protocol, all hogs within a 1-km radius of the affected area will be culled. The movement, shipment, and sale of hogs will be controlled within a 7-km radius while all hogs within a 10-km radius will be placed under monitoring.

85 Affected barangays with no active cases are not automatically considered ASF-free. LGUs with no recorded cases within 90 days from the date of confirmation must comply with the ASF zoning upgrading process prescribed by the DA before they can be officially declared ASF-free. The identification of suitable areas for calibrated repopulation is being undertaken separately by the DA through the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) Program.



## Accomplishments Under the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) Program (July 2022 to May 2024)



**68,565 piglets**  
distributed



**25,705 farmer-beneficiaries**  
received sentinel piglets



**227 bio-secured and climate-controlled facilities**

with a 300-head capacity constructed



**44 FCAs or LGUs**  
awarded with **Php10 million** worth of projects to establish a 30-sow level multiplier farm with a bio-secure and climate-resilient facility and equipment



A farmer inspects the sentinel pigs that are being distributed in Lipa, Batangas on June 16, 2023.

Photo Credit: DA

### Contained the Avian Influenza Outbreak<sup>86</sup>

In response to the recurring threat of Avian Influenza in the country, we enhanced our

bio-security measures. We conducted regular training to promote best practices in poultry management and disease prevention. Further, we strengthened our surveillance systems to detect and respond to outbreaks more effectively.

As of June 07, 2024, 47 cities and municipalities in 17 provinces<sup>87</sup> were declared Avian Influenza-free. As of May 31, 2024, we have finalized the policy and guidelines<sup>88</sup> for Avian Influenza vaccination and are preparing for the conduct of safety and efficacy trials.

### Strengthened Efforts to Curb Agricultural Smuggling<sup>89</sup>

We continued to protect the public from unsafe food products, and promoted the livelihood and well-being of our farmers and fisherfolk. We also intensified our campaign against the proliferation of smuggled agricultural commodities.

From October 2022 to May 31, 2024, we conducted 112 anti-smuggling operations and food safety inspections in ports and cold storage facilities. This led to the seizure of alleged smuggled agri-fishery products with an estimated value of Php2.73 billion.

We strengthened the monitoring of the movement of agricultural products across borders and enhanced border inspection. We also capacitated our personnel and stakeholders in the proper management of smuggling cases.

<sup>86</sup> DA, June 27, 2024.

<sup>87</sup> Camarines Sur, Davao del Sur, Rizal, South Cotabato, Ilocos Sur, Batangas, Capiz, Quezon, Aurora, Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, Cotabato, Isabela, Maguindanao del Sur, Benguet, Sultan Kudarat, and Bulacan.

<sup>88</sup> DA Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 49, s. 2023, titled, "Guidelines on Targeted Vaccination as a Complementary Tool for the Control of Avian Influenza."

<sup>89</sup> DA, June 27, 2024.





BOC authorities examine containers of misdeclared red and yellow onions at the Manila International Container Port on March 10, 2023.

Photo Credit: BOC

### Box 2.4 Mobile Plant Food Safety Laboratory

As part of our measures to ensure clean and safe food, the DA inaugurated the first-ever BPI Mobile Plant Food Safety Laboratory on April 11, 2024. This **PhP20-million mobile laboratory** has a modular set-up that could accommodate rapid screening and testing for pesticide residue, heavy metals, and microbiological contaminants from 20 to 30 samples per day at an affordable cost.



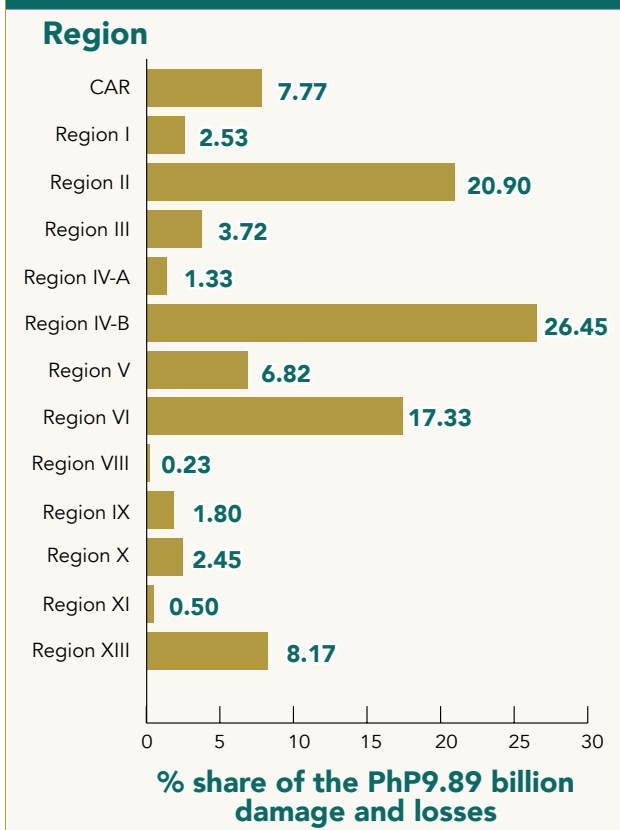
Photo Credit and Source: DA

### Cushioned the Effects of El Niño on the Agriculture and Fisheries Sector<sup>90</sup>

Since the onset of El Niño in July 2023, the country experienced way-below to below-normal rainfall conditions. At its peak on May 19, 2024, 61 provinces suffered drought,<sup>91</sup> 17 were under dry spells, and three experienced dry conditions.

The agriculture and fisheries sector was significantly affected by this phenomenon, incurring PhP9.89 billion in damage and losses as of June 06, 2024. Of these losses, PhP4.75 billion were absorbed by the rice sector, followed by corn (PhP3.37 billion), high-value crops (PhP1.70 billion), fisheries (PhP57.72 million), livestock and poultry (PhP10.47 million), and cassava (PhP3.42 million). Thirteen regions and 56 provinces reported losses (see Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15 El Niño Damage and Losses by Region (% share) (as of June 06, 2024)



Source: DA

To help farmers and fisherfolk cope with the adverse impact of El Niño, we implemented the following:

90 DA, June 27, 2024; and DOST, June 28, 2024.

91 Broken-down as follows: Luzon (29), Visayas (16), and Mindanao (16).

### Presidential Assistance to Farmers, Fisherfolk, and Families (PAFFF).<sup>92</sup>

We distributed financial assistance to farmers and fisherfolk nationwide through the PAFFF.



The President and the DA Secretary hand out PAFFF to a farmer-beneficiary in Iligan City on May 16, 2024.

Photo Credit: DA

From May 09, 2024 to June 05, 2024, we distributed PhP906 million in assistance to more than 90,000 beneficiaries in seven regions.<sup>93</sup>

**El Niño assistance provided.** Apart from the PAFFF, we also provided other assistance such as farm inputs, alternative livelihood, and technologies to select beneficiaries to compensate for their losses and aid in their recovery (see Figure 2.16).

**Adaptation strategies.** To maximize agricultural production despite the water shortage, we promoted the Alternate Wetting and Drying strategy, wherein rice fields are allowed to dry for a few days before reirrigation. It has reached 1.20 million farmers and was applied in 162,623.32 ha of rice areas, 26,105.58 ha of which are in identified vulnerable areas, as of June 06, 2024.

Figure 2.16 Assistance Provided to El Niño-affected Farmers and Fisherfolk (as of June 06, 2024)



Released **PhP659.17 million** production support assistance to **18,838 beneficiaries**



Distributed **66,039 native animals** worth **PhP18.08 million** to **367 groups** and **604 individuals**



Indemnified **20,372 farmers** totaling **PhP177.12 million**



Distributed **PhP459.49 million** worth of assistance composed of machineries, loans, farm inputs, and facilities to **3,829 individuals** and **386 group beneficiaries** in **Region IV-B**

Source: DA

We also advocated for the Quick Turnaround strategy, wherein rice crops are immediately replanted after harvest without waiting for the succeeding planting season. As of June 06, 2024, this was implemented in the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation Systems, Magat River Integrated Irrigation System, Region IV-B, and Region XII.

92 Office of the Executive Secretary (OES), June 21, 2024.

93 Regions II, V, IX, X, XI, XII, and BARMM.

# Promoting Water Security Through the Sustainable Management and Optimization of Water Resources



The Padada River Irrigation System serves 3,512 ha in Davao del Sur. Its rehabilitation was completed on January 16, 2023. It is the oldest national irrigation system in the Davao Region.

*Photo Credit: DA*

Water security is fundamental not only to food security, but also to national development.

Despite being an archipelago, the Philippines is considered water-stressed<sup>94</sup> and around 40 million Filipinos remain without access to formal water supply.<sup>95</sup>

Water is a finite resource. Climate change and overpopulation have made access to water more difficult. As such, we need to efficiently harness rainwater and surface water to lessen our dependence on aquifers. This requires recalibrating the way the government plans and invests in projects: from single purpose projects (e.g., flood control) to projects that would provide irrigation, potable water supply, and power, among others.

Sustainable management and optimization of our water resources is a high priority. Toward this end, we are pursuing innovative policies and programs, complemented by conservation and management efforts, to ensure that all Filipinos have a clean, safe, adequate, affordable, and accessible water supply.

## Advancing the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)<sup>96</sup>

We adopted the IWRM as a collaborative framework for planning and coordinating the management and use of water resources.

However, water administration is highly fragmented, with over 30 government agencies involved in various water-related functions.

94 An area is considered water-stressed when the annual water supply drops below the normal threshold of 1,700 cubic meters per person (Source: UN Water official website).

95 DENR, June 29, 2024.

96 DENR, June 29, 2024.

To address this, we created the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through EO No. 22, s. 2023.<sup>97</sup> It serves as the interim coordinating body that integrates and harmonizes all government efforts on water pending the creation of a central body for the sector through legislation.

The DENR-WRMO developed the Integrated Water Resources Master Plan (IWMP), which was approved by the NEDA Board on February 27, 2024. It has the following objectives: (i) maximize water supply; (ii) harmonize government plans and policies; (iii) ensure resiliency to extreme events and climate change; and (iv) engage LGUs, private sector, and civil society organizations (CSO).

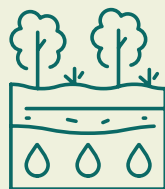
providers in the Philippines in a database. This effort is key toward optimizing water supply and demand as well as ensuring not only food security, but also energy security and public health.

### Improved Water Supply and Sanitation<sup>99</sup>

The growth of Metro Manila and its neighboring cities has outpaced our existing water infrastructure. These areas continue to rely on the Angat Dam, which supplies 90% (4,320 million liters per day [MLD]) of their water needs. To reduce our dependence on the Angat Dam, we continued harnessing the Laguna Lake as an alternative source.



#### Groundwater Monitoring and Regulation



In 2023, **61 Groundwater Monitoring Wells** were established in several highly urbanized and water-constrained areas, such as Metro Manila, Baguio, Metro Cebu, and Zamboanga, while **14 Groundwater Management Plans** were created.

To help achieve the IWMP's objectives, the DENR-WRMO mapped and quantified all bodies of surface water<sup>98</sup> and water service

#### Box 2.5 Poblacion Water Treatment Plant (WTP)



The Poblacion WTP, the third WTP that draws water from Laguna Lake, was inaugurated on December 15, 2023. This state-of-the-art facility, with a **full capacity of 150 MLD**, aims to serve approximately **one million customers** in Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, and Cavite.

*Photo Credit and Source: MWSS*

<sup>97</sup> Titled, "Creating the Water Resources Management Office in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources."

<sup>98</sup> Including the country's rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and wetlands.

<sup>99</sup> Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), June 27, 2024.

As a result, in 2023, the MWSS was able to augment raw water supply at 4,704.38 MLD, exceeding its target of 4,548.40 MLD for the year.

As of June 05, 2024, the MWSS sources 9% of its water supply from Laguna Lake (450 MLD) and 1% from groundwater (50 MLD).

On sanitation, the MWSS, through its concessionaires, increased the population connected to the sewerage system from 3.96 million in the first quarter of 2023 to 4.62 million by the end of the same year,<sup>100</sup> which exceeds their 4.31 million target. This is equivalent to an additional 658,443 population with sewerage.

### Box 2.6 Upper Wawa Dam



With a cost of **Php26.50 billion**, the Upper Wawa Dam in Rodriguez, Rizal is the largest water supply dam to be built in **over 50 years** after the Angat Dam.

Its 710 MLD capacity will benefit over 700,000 households or around **3.5 million Filipinos**.

It has started impounding water in 2024 and will start its commercial operations in 2025.

*Photo Credit and Source: MWSS*



### Rain Water Collector System (RWCS) Program

The **RWCS Program** aims to provide adequate potable water supply through the establishment of rainwater collectors in every barangay nationwide.

**8,188** RWCS installed and constructed  
July 2022–May 2024

**25,387** Total RWCS Nationwide  
January 2016–May 2024



An RWCS, which was constructed by the DPWH, provides additional water supply to the Panayuran Elementary School in Calbiga, Samar.

*Photo Credit and Source: DPWH*

### Investing in Multi-Purpose Water Projects through PPPs<sup>101</sup>

As part of the IWMP, we leveraged our strong partnerships with the private sector to guide investments toward effective water management—one that ensures the multiple uses of water resources. On October 04, 2023, the NIA, DENR-WRMO, and the National Water Resources Board signed a MOA to repurpose the NIA's water rights, specifically their excess irrigation water for agriculture, power generation, bulk water supply, and other purposes.

<sup>100</sup> Equivalent to 27% sewerage coverage in its service areas.

<sup>101</sup> DENR, June 29, 2024; and DA, June 27, 2024.

We identified 247 potential multipurpose water projects for PPPs, which were presented to more than 400 potential investors.<sup>102</sup> As of May 07, 2024, the government has received more than 90 proposals from the private sector.

### Box 2.7 Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project Phase II (JRMP II)



The JRMP II, located in Iloilo, is the **first large-scale water reservoir** to be constructed in the Visayas region.

With an estimated service area of **31,840 ha**, it has multipurpose benefits: irrigation, bulk water supply, hydropower, solar power, and eco-tourism, among others.

*Photo Credit and Source: DA*

### Pursued Water Security Amid Climate Change and Disasters<sup>103</sup>

To achieve water security, we must also reduce its destructive capacity by transforming floodwater into supply that can be used in households, industries, and agriculture.

### Invested in flood control projects.

In preparation for intensified storms and floods as a consequence of climate change, we increased the flood control budget of the DPWH by 68% from PhP208.55 billion in FY 2022 to PhP349.33 billion in FY 2024. The 2024 budget covers 4,764 projects, which is 17% more than the 4,063 projects funded in FY 2022.

Further, consistent with our thrust to promote water's multipurpose use, the DPWH issued a memorandum<sup>104</sup> to all implementing agencies on the integration of comprehensive water management in flood control projects.

### Strategic Focus of the Integration of Comprehensive Water Management in Flood Control Projects



Development of **multifunctional** infrastructure



Enhanced **partnership** among the DPWH, NIA, and DENR



Proactive **adaptation** to climate change

<sup>102</sup> During the two investment fora held in November 2023 and February 2024.

<sup>103</sup> DENR, June 29, 2024; MWSS, June 27, 2024; and DPWH, June 25, 2024.

<sup>104</sup> DPWH, Memorandum on the Integration of Comprehensive Water Management in Flood Control Projects, May 08, 2024.

## Box 2.8 Completed Big-Ticket Flood Control Projects

More than 5,500 flood control projects have been completed from July 2022 to May 2024. Big-ticket projects include the following:



### Flood Risk Management Project for the Cagayan De Oro River

- Implementation period: December 2018 to March 2024
- **Project Cost: PhP12.54 billion**
- Funding source: JICA
- Projected impact: Protect 60,900 individuals from flooding



### Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Measures in the Low-Lying Areas of Pampanga Bay

- Implementation period: January 2018 to April 2024
- **Project Cost: PhP7.57 billion**
- Funding source: Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund
- Projected impact: Shorten flood duration near the Pampanga River Basin from 28 days to 17 days

Photo Credit and Source: DPWH



## Efforts to Mitigate the Impact of El Niño on Water Supply

We prioritized water security under the 2023 to 2024 El Niño National Action Plan Framework. Under this plan, we undertook the following:



### Monitoring of Major Dams

- Closely monitored the **water level** and releases of the Angat and other critical dams
- Prioritized the release of water for **domestic use** during periods of water shortage



### Water Supply Augmentation

- Constructed **modular or portable treatment plants and water conveyance facilities** in various cities, such as Cavite, Parañaque, and Laguna
- Utilized **145 MLD deep wells** for MWSS service areas
- Recovered **27.55% non-revenue water** in MWSS service areas



### Water Conservation

- Issued **MC No. 22** on June 07, 2023 on the strict implementation of water conservation measures and water pressure management strategies
- Issued guidelines on **water conservation measures** to all government offices:
  - using harvested rainwater for cleaning;
  - shutting down building valves at certain hours; and
  - monitoring of leaks and faulty fixtures.

# Way Forward

The future of the agriculture and fisheries sector lies in modernization. We must step up and adopt global practices in the agricultural sector to bring affordable and quality food to every Filipino family's table.

As we move toward a stronger and more profitable agriculture sector, we are focusing on developing and improving our postharvest systems, and using more innovative and effective farm methods and machinery. This would help bring sufficient supply of food, lower prices, and reduce dependence on importation. We continue to establish efficient logistics systems by expediting the completion of the 1,201.64 km of FMRs under the FMRDP this year.

We are integrating and harmonizing digital platforms to develop a National Information Network that will provide accurate and real-time data. We are leveraging on emerging digital agricultural technologies to effectively address challenges throughout the value chain, from pre-production to marketing. These technological innovations and solutions will enable us to serve farmers and fisherfolk in a more efficient, responsive, and modern way.

The country's agriculture and fisheries sector is transitioning from farming to agribusiness as we boost and expand local and international market access. We are empowering our farmers as market players to increase their incomes. Through this, we can make the industry an appealing profession for future generations.

The KADIWA Program is being expanded and institutionalized through strong collaboration with the LGUs. By the end of 2025, we expect to have 15 bigger and fully functional KADIWA centers in major cities nationwide.

Managing the price of rice will be key in the battle against high cost of commodities. As such, we are proposing for the immediate passage of a bill that would amend the Rice Tariffication Law. This aims to significantly contribute to the competitiveness of rice production, increase the income of farmers, and allow the government to stabilize the price of rice.

Amid the volatility of costs of production inputs, we continue to find ways to lower and stabilize the prices of all agricultural commodities. We are drafting a set of implementing rules that would allow the DA to procure, purchase, import, or stockpile any basic necessity or prime commodity; devise ways to distribute them for sale at reasonable prices in areas where there is shortage; and allocate a buffer fund in its annual appropriations in accordance with RA No. 7581 or the Price Act.

Farmers and FCAs need to build their savings and access credit so that they can invest in a timely manner for their farming business. We are innovating the delivery of financial services to the rural areas by strengthening links between small farmers and financial institutions. Farmers are being educated on the benefits of agricultural insurance and credit.

We are continuously accelerating the distribution of lands under the agrarian reform program and expanding the provision of strategic support services. The ARBs are being extensively capacitated on agribusiness and modern farm technologies.

We are transforming our agrarian cooperatives into agri-enterprise centers that increase livelihood opportunities and improve the quality of life of our farmers and their families.



To ensure sufficient and clean water supply, this Administration is pushing for the creation of single authority to integrate all water-related agencies.

We continue to invest and pursue water infrastructure projects to improve water supply. Some of these ongoing projects are the: (i) New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project; (ii) Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Stage 3; (iii) Laguna Lake East Bay Phase 2 WTP; (iv) Bigte-Novaliches Aqueduct No. 7; and (v) Angat Water Transmission Improvement Project Tunnel No. 5.

Aside from ensuring the timely completion of these projects, we are carrying out other high-value, high-impact water projects that can be undertaken through government, PPP, or other schemes. These include the following: (i) Cavite province-wide bulk water supply; (ii) Pampanga river impoundments; (iii) Bohol-Cebu water pipeline; (iv) Zamboanga City multipurpose dam; and (v) water supply for GIDAs and island barangays. We are also expediting the review of PPP proposals for various water projects using NIA water rights.

Also urgent is the implementation of projects and other strategies to provide the 40 million underserved Filipinos access to potable water supply. We are working to roll out small desalination systems for island barangays this 2024, as well as infrastructure projects for upland barangays and bulk water projects in the BARMM by 2025.

This Administration is exploring innovative funding schemes for water projects including foreign funding and issuance of bonds at competitive interest rates, which the general public can buy.

We are proposing ten flood control projects to be implemented from

2024 to 2037 costing more than PhP500 billion. These proposed flood control projects are the: (i) Integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation (InFRA) Project 2; (ii) Central Luzon-Pampanga River Floodway Project; (iii) Parañaque Spillway/Tunnel Project; (iv) Ambal-Simuay River and Rio Grande de Mindanao River Flood Control and Riverbank Protection; (v) Davao City Flood Control and Drainage Project; (vi) Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Measures in the Low-Lying Areas of Pampanga Bay, Stage II; (vii) InFRA 3 Project (Aklan, Allah, and Ilog-Hilabangan); (viii) InFRA 4 Project (Agno, Cadac-an, and Mag-asawang Tubig); (ix) Flood Control Projects for Pampanga and Bicol River Basins-Package I; and (x) Flood Control Projects for Panay and Agusan River Basins-Package II.

Our dreams of a modernized and industrialized agriculture and water sectors will only be realized through the support of the Legislature. We are pushing for the following legislative measures to continuously transform the Philippine agriculture and water sectors into modern industries and ensure a robust food and water supply.

- National Land Use Act;
- Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act;
- Amendments to the Rice Tariffication Law;
- Amendments to the Cooperative Code;
- Amendments to the Fisheries Code;
- Blue Economy Act;
- FMR Development Acceleration; and
- Department of Water Resources Act.

Training the next women in the field of science,  
Rizal High School, Pasig City

Photo Credit: Department of Education (DepEd)



# CHAPTER 03

# Investing in Social Development for Poverty Reduction

The Filipino people is our country's greatest resource and the fundamental strength of this nation. By investing in social development and focusing on reducing poverty incidence, we are strengthening one of the critical pillars of sustainable development.

We committed to further reduce our poverty rate to single digit by 2028. That is why the development agenda of this Administration prioritized rapid, deep, sustained, and inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction.



*Sa ilalim ng Bagong Pilipinas, walang manlalamang at walang malalamangan, walang mang-iiwan at walang maiiwanan...Tiyakin po natin na ang bawat Pilipino ay mabigyan ng pagkakataong umasenso at gumaan ang buhay ng kanilang sarili, at ng kanilang pamilya."*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
Distribution of PAFFF in Iligan City  
May 16, 2024



The President interacts with the people during the distribution of rice on September 26, 2023 in Malate, City of Manila.

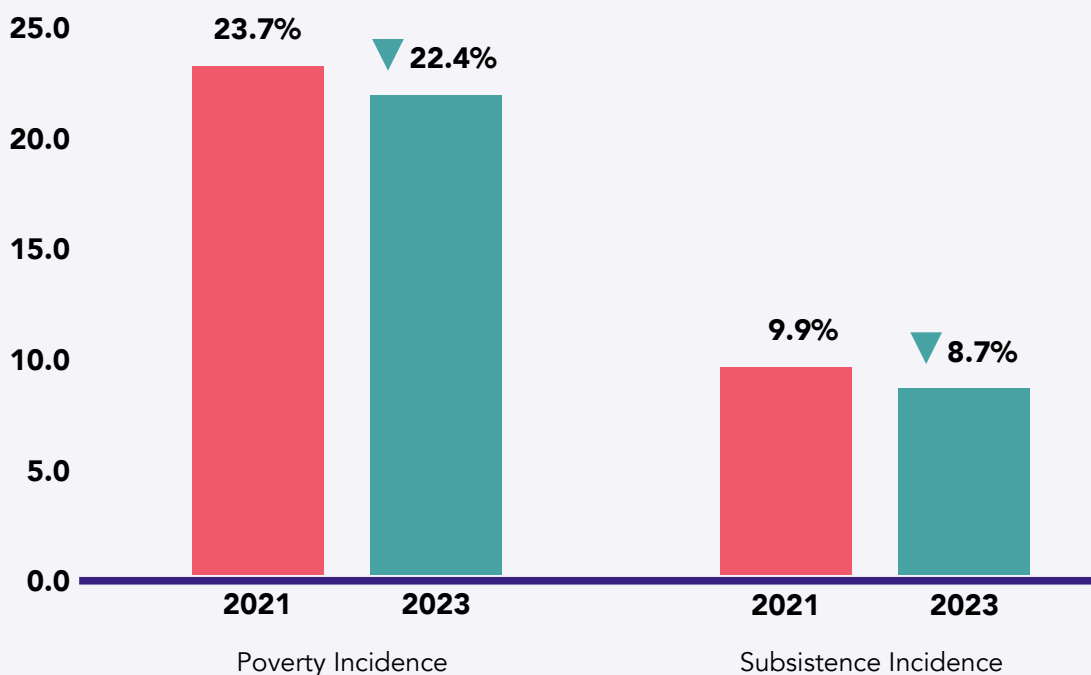
Photo Credit: PCO

We are happy to report that our efforts since this Administration took the helm are beginning to pay off. Poverty incidence among population<sup>105</sup> went down from 23.7% or 26.14 million Filipinos in the first semester of 2021 to 22.4% or 25.24 million in the first semester of 2023 (see *Figure 3.1*) despite an increase in the monthly poverty threshold for a family of five.<sup>106</sup>

Subsistence incidence among population<sup>107</sup> also went down from 9.9% or 10.94 million Filipinos in the first semester of 2021 to 8.7% or about 9.79 million in the first semester of 2023, despite an increase in the monthly food threshold for a family of five.

However, as poverty is a long-standing multi-dimensional problem, we remain committed to implementing a concerted whole-of-nation approach to address it. We are empowering the poor and vulnerable through responsive social protection programs, good quality health and education systems, meaningful jobs, and affordable homes. We hope that all of these efforts are leading to a reduction in poverty and increase in economic prosperity for all.

**Figure 3.1 Poverty and Subsistence Incidence among Population, Philippines**  
(First Semester 2021 and 2023)



Source: NEDA

105 The proportion of Filipinos whose per capita income is not sufficient to meet their basic food and non-food needs (Source: NEDA).

106 NEDA, June 25, 2024.

107 The proportion of Filipinos whose income is not enough to buy even the basic food needs (Source: NEDA).

# Strengthening Social Protection and Expanding Social Welfare Services



The President meets with *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program (4Ps) beneficiaries during the distribution of rice in General Trias, Cavite on September 22, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

We remain committed to providing compassionate public service to poor and marginalized Filipinos under the mantra, “*Bawat Buhay Mahalaga.*” We vowed to strongly implement social welfare and development services so we could make a significant impact in reducing poverty.<sup>108</sup>

The DSWD’s PhP245 billion budget for FY 2024 shall be utilized to ensure the fast and efficient delivery of social welfare and development programs to the poor. This is a significant increase from its PhP196 billion budget in 2023.<sup>109</sup>

## Empowered Families through Cash Transfers and Other Assistance<sup>110</sup>

We continue to provide social protection programs that enable families to become

self-reliant, healthy, educated, and gainfully employed.

**4Ps.** The government continues to implement the 4Ps as its national poverty reduction strategy to help break the intergenerational poverty cycle. We increased our budget for this program from PhP102.6 billion in 2023 to PhP106.3 billion this 2024 to serve 4.4 million beneficiaries.<sup>111</sup>

The DSWD also strengthened the program’s monitoring and evaluation mechanisms using the Social Welfare Development Indicator (SWDI).<sup>112</sup> This is to ensure that cash grants are promptly and efficiently distributed to eligible beneficiaries.

108 DSWD, June 26, 2024.

109 DBM, June 26, 2024.

110 DSWD, June 26, 29 and July 03, 2024.

111 DBM, June 26, 2024.

112 The SWDI is a reassessment tool that helps to determine who among the households are in the (i) Survival Level (Level 1) or households that are considered the poorest; (ii) Subsistence Level (Level 2) or households who have minimal income and barely meet the basic living necessities; and (iii) Self-Sufficient Level (Level 3) or households with enough income and resources in meeting the demands of all household members (Source: DSWD).

As of the first quarter of 2024, the program covered almost 98% or 4.31 million of its annual target of 4.4 million households. The 4Ps has so far resulted in a reduction in severe stunting and the promotion of health-seeking behavior that is essential in preventive health care and productivity.

### 4Ps Accomplishments



**426,446 household beneficiaries** assessed as self-sufficient\* and have graduated from the program from September 2023 to May 2024



**98.03%** compliance with health conditions  
**99.41%** compliance on deworming of 6-14 years old children for Period 2 of 2024 (April 2024 to May 2024)



**407,120 children** completed senior high school (SHS) for school year (SY) 2022-2023



**35 topnotcher passers** produced from the program from September 2022 to April 2024

*\*To be considered self-sufficient, the family beneficiary should have enough income at the time of graduation; able to cope with its daily needs; and has achieved the first two levels of the SWDI (Survival and Subsistence Levels).*

### **Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan- Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS).**

This poverty alleviation program uses the community-driven development approach, a globally recognized strategy for achieving service delivery, poverty reduction, and good governance outcomes.

### **Community-Driven Development (CDD).**

This program not only delivers social services to poor and vulnerable communities, but also invests in the communities. As of May 31, 2024, 4,490 sub-projects (e.g., construction of multi-purpose buildings, barangay health station, disaster response facility, corn and rice mill building, improvement of water system) were completed that directly contributed to and benefited the communities.

### **Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) program.**

The BP2 program is the implementing mechanism of EO No. 114, s. 2020.<sup>113</sup> It aims to support beneficiaries who decided to settle in their original hometowns or other resettlement areas. Through various assistance (e.g., transportation, psychosocial support, livelihood grants),



*When you want something and you work hard for it, it's really possible to get out of your situation. Now that there are programs from the government helping low-income families, it's up to them to explore and make the most of these opportunities."*

Khane Jevie Cervantes  
Top 1 in the March 2024 Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers  
4Ps Beneficiary  
Barangay Poblacion, Cateel, Davao Oriental

113 Titled, "Institutionalizing the *Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-Asa* Program as a Pillar of Balanced Regional Development, Creating a Council Therefor, and for Other Purposes."

### Box 3.1 BP2 Program



Ms. Teresita Raymundo and her family from Sabangan, Mountain Province received a Transitory Family Support Package amounting to PhP45,000 for their basic needs, and PhP50,000 Livelihood Settlement Grant. They utilized these funds to start an egg production business. The family purchased 140 heads of chicken and is harvesting a minimum of four dozen eggs per day.

*Photo Credit and Source: DSWD*

the program enables them to start a new life while helping decongest urban areas. Eligible LGUs with returning families can receive community grants from the DSWD for the highly prioritized needs of their communities.

The implementation of the BP2 Program was concluded in 2023, following the institutionalization of the *Oplan Pag-abot* Project (see page 77 for further details) under EO No. 52, s. 2024.<sup>114</sup> The BP2 assistance packages were thus adopted into *Oplan Pag-abot*. From the program's inception in 2020 to its conclusion, 15,626 families or 40,189 individuals were served under the BP2 Program.

#### **Cash-for-Work Program (CFWP).**

This program supplements the CDD by providing temporary immediate financial relief while instilling the KALAHI-CIDSS

principles of community participation, transparency, and accountability. The target beneficiaries work on a community task or service for a maximum of 90 days in exchange for 100% of the daily minimum wage rate for non-agricultural workers.

From 2023 to May 31, 2024, the CFWP served 107,450 beneficiaries (65.32%) out of a program of 164,492.

#### **Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).**

This is a community-based program that provides capacity-building and income-generating opportunities to poor and vulnerable households and communities. As of May 15, 2024, 225,037 households (80.67%) were served out of the 278,951 program households under the 2023 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

#### **Combated Hunger and Malnutrition<sup>115</sup>**

Hunger and malnutrition have been a perennial concern in the country that has led to stunted growth, weakened immune systems, and increased risk of diseases, especially among the poor. In our pursuit of eradicating hunger and malnutrition and their adverse effects, we intensified our anti-hunger programs to cater to marginalized communities and individuals.

#### **Walang Gutom 2027: Food Stamp Program (FSP).**

We issued EO No. 44<sup>116</sup> in October 2023 to make the FSP a flagship program of this Administration. We commenced its six-month pilot implementation in several areas across the country in December 2023.<sup>117</sup>

114 Titled, "Institutionalizing the *Pag-abot* Program, Constituting an Inter-Agency Committee Therefor, and for Other Purposes."

115 DSWD, June 26, 29 and July 03, 2024.

116 Titled, "Establishing the "Walang Gutom 2027: Food Stamp Program" as a Flagship Program of the National Government."

117 The pilot implementation covers 3,000 families in five areas, namely: (i) Tondo, City of Manila; (ii) San Mariano, Isabela; (iii) Dapa, Surigao Del Norte; (iv) Parang, Maguindanao; and (v) Garchitorena, Camarines Sur.

As of May 31, 2024, 2,366 households were registered as beneficiaries of the pilot. Through this initiative, eligible households received PhP3,000 worth of food credits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which eliminates the need for physical coupons or stamps. The EBT card shall be used to purchase food items at KADIWA stalls and authorized retail stores to promote well-balanced diets and improve nutritional outcomes. The EBT card also allows beneficiaries to track transactions and remaining credits. The use of the EBT is aligned with our agenda to digitalize service delivery.

This July 2024, the program is being fully implemented to serve 300,000 household beneficiaries from 21 provinces in 10 regions (II, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII, XIII, and the NCR). This expansion will continue with



*Malaking bagay po ang naitulong sa amin ng pamilya ko, dahil minsan, wala kaming makain, kasi po hindi stable 'yong trabaho namin. Kaya po, malaking tulong ang programa na ito sa amin kasi nakakakain kami nang maayos."*

Sonia Maico  
FSP Beneficiary  
Tondo, City of Manila

an additional 300,000 in 2025 and another 400,000 in 2026. By 2027, our goal is to support one million food-poor households.

Other programs to combat hunger and malnutrition include the following:

### **Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (EPAHP) program.**

In April 2024, we signed MC No. 47,<sup>118</sup> instructing the Task Force on Zero Hunger to intensify its coordination with stakeholders to make the EPAHP Program more sustainable.

The EPAHP is a banner program of the Task Force, which aims to institutionalize efforts to mitigate hunger and promote food and nutrition security. It links Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to prospective markets and provides credit assistance to support food production, processing, and distribution.

In collaboration with the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, we also launched the Digital Mapping System in 2023, which established a comprehensive database for CBOs that shall be linked with the DSWD feeding programs.

As of May 31, 2024, the Task Force conducted 239 advocacy activities on Negotiated Procurement-Community Participation (e.g., monitoring and evaluation of supply partners, capacity building) to enable government agencies to directly purchase agricultural and fishery products from accredited farmers and fisherfolk cooperatives and enterprises. This can help to generate additional income for farmers and fisherfolk.

118 Titled, "Directing All Government Agencies and Instrumentalities, and Encouraging All Local Government Units, to Support the Implementation of the Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty Program."



As of May 31, 2024, PhP207.45 million worth of sales or contracts were made between 122 CBOs and various government feeding programs.

### **Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP).**

The SFP provides food and fresh milk to children ages 3 to 6 years old currently enrolled in LGU-run Child Development Centers (CDCs) and children ages 2 to 4 years old in Supervised Neighborhood Play centers. The program aims to address hunger, reduce micronutrient deficiency, improve physical resilience, and sustain the children's nutritional status.

As of May 31, 2024, the program served 1.62 million children out of the 1.75 million target for 2023. For FYs 2024 and 2025,



*Dako gyud kaayo tabang [ang] feeding program...dili naman ka...mabusy og kara-kara og pakaon [sa bata] kay sa skwelahan naman daan busog naman siya."*

*The feeding program is really a big help because you no longer need to be busy preparing food since they are already full at school.*

Love Pearl Bendanillo  
Parent of an SFP Beneficiary  
Quezon, Bukidnon



Children enrolled in a CDC in Barangay Mabuhay, San Fernando, Bukidnon, enjoy the hot meals prepared by parent volunteers as part of the government's SFP.

Photo Credit: DSWD

we aim to cover 2.02 million children in public CDCs in barangays. We further intend to increase the number of beneficiaries year on year.

### **School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP).<sup>119</sup>**

Recognizing the effect of malnutrition on cognitive development, we continued to provide meals to malnourished and undernourished incoming kindergarten and grades one to six learners through the SBFP.

From July 2022 to May 2024, 5.60 million learners were fed with hot nutritious meals and 5.12 million learners were provided with milk. For FY 2024, the DepEd doubled the budget for the program from PhP5.7 billion in FY 2023 to PhP11.7 billion and extended feeding days from 120 to 220.

The DepEd also launched the "Lakas sa Gatas" Campaign, encouraging milk consumption among learners and the patronage of fresh milk from local dairy farmers. We conducted nutritious food products and milk supply mapping with suppliers to match the demand, and

engaged with local dairy farmers for the supply of pasteurized or sterilized milk to be used in the program.

According to the SBFP Evaluation and Feedback Survey, 57% of learners became enthusiastic and energetic after the completion of the program, 52% experienced weight gain, and 51% had stronger immune systems.

We hope that through these programs, we are able to improve the availability and accessibility of nutritious food for poor households. We anticipate that our efforts would lead to lower incidence of involuntary hunger and better health for our people.



*Lalong lumakas ang aking anak simula noong nag-feeding siya. Nagpapasalamat ako dahil maraming bata ang natutulungan ng feeding program. Mula rin noong nag-feeding iyong anak ko, okay na iyong grades niya. Palagi na rin siyang kumakain, hinahanap-hanap niya yung feeding."*

Imelda Cambalon  
Parent of an SBFP Beneficiary  
Angadanan, Isabela

## Cared for our Senior Citizens and Other Vulnerable Groups<sup>120</sup>

We value our senior citizens, hence, it is important for us to protect and assist them. We also need to look after vulnerable groups, such as children, families, and individuals living in the streets. Thus, we provided the following programs for their continued protection and development:

### **Improved benefits for senior citizens.**

We gave full support to our senior citizens to enable them to lead meaningful lives. We provided the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens, which is a monthly stipend in the amount of PhP1,000 per beneficiary to augment their daily subsistence and other medical needs. As of May 31, 2024, 2.80 million senior citizens (68.46%) received their stipend out of the 4.09 million target beneficiaries for 2024.

To honor our senior citizens who reached the age of 100 or older, we provide a cash gift and felicitation letter from the Office of the President as tribute to their lifelong contributions to our country.

From July 2023 to December 2023, 2,444 centenarians were provided with a cash gift of PhP100,000 each. Meanwhile, from January 2024 to May 31, 2024, 747 centenarians (42.44%) of the 1,760 annual target beneficiaries received their cash gift.

The DA, DTI, and DOE recently issued Joint Administrative Order (JAO) No. 24-02, s. 2024<sup>121</sup> increasing the special discount for senior citizens and people with

120 DSWD, June 26, 29, and July 03, 2024.

121 Titled, "2024 Revised Rules on Granting Special Discounts to Senior Citizens and Persons with Disability on Purchase of Basic Necessities and Prime Commodities."



The President welcomes to Malacañang 107-year-old Apo Whang-Od Oggay, a Kalinga tattoo artist, on February 14, 2024, which also coincides with the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Juan Ponce Enrile.

Photo Credit: PCO

disability for purchase of basic necessities and prime commodities. From PhP65, the discount was increased to PhP125 per week, which translates to a new purchase cap of PhP2,500, compared to the previous limit of PhP1,300 per week.

**Pag-abot Program.** We launched this program on June 30, 2023 as part of the DSWD's efforts to expand social protection for families and individuals living in the streets.

Under this program, we aim to provide them with interventions, such as medical assistance, food support, transportation and relocation aid, livelihood opportunities, transitory shelter, family support packages, and emergency financial assistance. It also prepares families to return to their hometowns following a thorough assessment by the *Pag-abot* Social Workers.

To further enhance and unify the delivery of services under this program, we issued

EO No. 52 on January 18, 2024 institutionalizing the *Pag-abot* Program and creating an Inter-Agency Committee for that purpose.

As of May 31, 2024, the DSWD profiled 5,472 individuals in street situations and reached out to 2,511 families to provide them with the needed interventions.

**Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS).** The program serves as a stop-gap measure to support the recovery of individuals and families suffering from unexpected life events or crises. It provides financial assistance (e.g., medical, funeral, transportation, educational, food, cash relief), material assistance (i.e., food and non-food items), psychosocial support, and referral service to its beneficiaries.

Over PhP70.63 billion worth of assistance was released under the AICS from July 2022 to May 2024, benefiting 12.98 million beneficiaries.

## Forging a Stronger, Affordable, and Accessible Healthcare System



The President leads the launch of the country's first lung transplant program at the Lung Center of the Philippines in Quezon City on January 23, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the weaknesses in our healthcare system, such as the inadequacies of our health infrastructure, processes, and human resources for health (HRH). However, it also presented an invaluable opportunity to make things better to realize our goal for our people to live long and healthy lives.

Given this, we renewed our commitment to advancing the goals of Universal Health Care (UHC) in the country. The Department of Health (DOH) adopted the Health Sector 8-Point Action Agenda (HS8PAA), aptly called, "*Sa Bagong Pilipinas, Bawat Buhay ay Mahalaga.*" The Agenda lies at the core of the National Objectives for Health 2023-

2028, the government's medium-term strategy to strengthen the health sector.

The Agenda represents an important step toward achieving the Filipino people's aspirations for a comfortable and secure life. This focuses on placing every Filipino at the heart of healthcare reforms, promoting community health, and strengthening healthcare institutions and healthcare worker (HCW) welfare.<sup>122</sup>

To financially support the health programs and projects of this Administration, we significantly increased the DOH<sup>123</sup> budget by 15% from PhP274 billion in 2022 to PhP315 billion in 2024.<sup>124</sup>

122 DOH, July 01, 2024.

123 Includes budget allocation for DOH Office of the Secretary-Proper, attached agencies, and attached corporations (Source: DOH, July 01, 2024).

124 DBM, June 26, 2024.



The DOH inaugurates the first *Bagong Urgent Care and Ambulatory Service (BUCAS) Center* in Sto. Tomas, Pampanga on March 06, 2024.

Photo Credit: DOH

### Improved Access to Primary Health Care (PHC), including Specialty Services<sup>125</sup>

For a developing country like the Philippines, prevention of illness is key to better health outcomes and lower health care costs. Hence, we focused on improving the delivery of PHC, where patients receive comprehensive and coordinated health services. PHC is effective in the prevention and early management of diseases before they become more complicated or severe. Thus, strengthening PHC, which is the heart of UHC, can reduce overcrowding in hospitals and make quality health care more accessible and affordable.

We intensified our individual- and population-based interventions to maintain and protect health and wellbeing. We are constructing primary care facilities (PCF) in all provinces. We also launched other programs that would bring health services closer to the people.

### Implemented the Health Facilities Enhancement Program (HFEP).

To progressively improve access of Filipinos to health care, we continually construct, upgrade, and equip our health facilities. We also increased the budgetary support for HFEP by 6.6%, from PHP26.81 billion in 2023 to PHP28.58 billion in 2024.<sup>126</sup>

From January 2023 to May 2024, an additional 6,082 HFEP projects were completed. These projects include the construction, upgrading, or equipping of 2,899 PCFs, 631 LGU hospitals, 2,203 DOH hospitals, and 349 other health care facilities.

### Established BUCAS Centers.

On March 06, 2024, we launched the first BUCAS Center in Sto. Tomas, Pampanga. BUCAS Centers are often attached as extensions of DOH hospitals and offer preventive, diagnostic, and curative primary care services. They are convenient and

125 DOH, July 01 and 03, 2024.

126 DBM, June 26, 2024.

accessible one-stop shops for patients seeking health services. BUCAS Centers may soon be operated on a 24/7 basis, serving as the catalyst to link the rest of the Health Care Provider Network (HCPN).<sup>127</sup>

As of July 02, 2024, we opened 23 functional BUCAS Centers across the country (see Figure 3.2). This is a significant progress toward our goal of establishing

28 BUCAS Centers to serve at least 28 million poor Filipinos by 2028.

**Established Super Health Centers (SHC).**

To further improve primary care service delivery, we also built SHCs, which are stand-alone PCFs owned and managed by LGUs, but form part of the DOH's Primary Care Provider Network (PCPN).<sup>128</sup> These facilities provide primary clinical laboratory services, diagnostic

Figure 3.2 Locations of the Functional BUCAS Centers Nationwide



127 Refers to a group of primary to tertiary care providers, whether public or private, offering people-centered and comprehensive care in an integrated and coordinated manner with the primary care provider acting as the navigator and coordinator of health care within the network (Source: RA No. 11223, titled, "Universal Health Care Act").

128 Refers to a coordinated group of public, private, or mixed primary care providers and serves as the foundation of the HCPN (Source: IRR of RA No. 11223).

### Box 3.2 BUCAS Beneficiary



In January 2024, Ms. Carolyn Julian suffered a stroke and required several follow-up visits to ensure complete recovery and return to normal occupational life.

Living in the far side of town, it took her more than an hour to reach the Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center (MMMHC) for physical therapy sessions and specialty consultations.

Fortunately, the DOH, through the MMMHC, established a BUCAS Center in the municipality of Banna, Ilocos Norte. This reduced Carolyn's travel time to less than 10 minutes and significantly lowered the associated costs. At the Banna BUCAS Center, she was also able to immediately consult with a cardiologist and pulmonologist regarding her heart condition.

*Photo Credit and Source: DOH*

radiologic services, pharmacy, birthing services, minor surgical services, dental services, ambulance services, and telemedicine.

As of May 31, 2024, 218 SHCs have been completed, with 37 currently functional. By the end of 2028, we are targeting to complete 600 functional SHCs.

**Established Specialty Centers.** On August 23, 2023, we signed into law RA No. 11959, or the Regional Specialty Centers Act, to extend the provision of specialty care services<sup>129</sup> to the regions and expand the services offered by our hospitals.

From 2023 to June 2024, we increased the number of functional specialty centers by 60, bringing the total to 158.

**Deployed Bagong Pilipinas Mobile PCF.** We procured 83 *Bagong Pilipinas* Mobile PCFs to be deployed in every province and in the NCR.

As of June 25, 2024, seven *Bagong Pilipinas* Mobile PCFs have been turned over to all provinces of Region III. We are partnering with LGUs on the deployment locations of these mobile PCFs.

The LGUs shall likewise provide the human resources to operate these mobile PCFs with the assistance of the DOH. These mobile PCFs are complementing the capacity of existing health facilities. With their mobility, they can reach more patients in remote and underserved areas.



A *Bagong Pilipinas* Mobile PCF was procured by the DOH for deployment to a recipient province.

*Photo Credit: DOH*

129 Brain and Spine Care, Burn Care, Cancer Care, Cardiovascular Care, Dermatology, Ear, Nose, and Throat Care, Eye Care, Geriatric Care, Infectious Disease and Tropical Medicine, Lung Care, Mental Health, Neonatal Care, Orthopedic Care, Physical Rehabilitation Medicine, Renal Care and Transplant, Toxicology, and Trauma Care.

**Supported other initiatives.** The government also supported the following flagship outreach programs:

- *Libreng Laboratoryo, Konsulta, at Gamot Para sa Lahat (LAB for ALL) caravan*, an important initiative of First Lady Liza Araneta Marcos that delivers laboratory and medical services. The LAB for ALL caravan has visited 29 locations nationwide from May 2023 to June 26, 2024.
- *Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF)*, which delivers various government assistance, including health education, and medical services. The BPSF has visited 20 locations nationwide from August 2023 to June 22, 2024.

## Guaranteed Financial Risk Protection<sup>130</sup>

In line with the first two priority actions of the HS8PAA, i.e., “*Bawat Pilipino, ramdam ang kalusugan*” and “*Ligtas, dekalidad at mapagkalingang serbisyo*,” we continue to work toward achieving the goal of the UHC Act to make quality health care services affordable and accessible to all.

**Implemented the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP).**<sup>131</sup> True to its mandate to ease the financial burden of Filipinos during times of illness, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) implemented benefits enhancements starting Calendar Year 2023 (see Table 3.1). These include service and financial coverage expansion of hemodialysis benefits from

Table 3.1 PhilHealth Benefits Enhancements

Case Rate/Benefit Package	Old	New	Increase
<b>2023</b>			
High-Risk Pneumonia	PhP32,000	PhP90,100	182%
Acute Stroke, Ischemic	PhP28,000	PhP76,000	171%
Acute Stroke, Hemorrhagic	PhP38,000	PhP80,000	111%
Hemodialysis Benefit Package (increased number of treatment sessions)	144 sessions	156 sessions	12 sessions
Z Benefit Package for Orthopedic Implants (range of coverage)	PhP42,660 to PhP169,400	PhP100,000 to PhP260,000	N/A
<b>2024</b>			
30% Inflation Adjustment of Case Rates	N/A	N/A	N/A
Global Budget	N/A	N/A	N/A
Z Benefit Package for Breast Cancer	PhP100,000	PhP1,400,000	1,300%
Neonatal Sepsis	PhP11,700	PhP25,793	120%
Bronchial Asthma	PhP9,000	PhP22,488	150%
Konsulta Expansion (increase in capitation)	PhP750	PhP1,700	127%
Hemodialysis Benefit Package (expanded coverage per treatment session)	PhP2,600	PhP4,000	54%
<i>Source: PhilHealth</i>			

130 DOH, July 01, 2024.

131 PhilHealth, July 03, 2024.



144 to 156 treatment sessions and increase of the package rate from PhP2,600 to PhP4,000 per session.

On February 14, 2024, PhilHealth introduced a 30% increase to expand financial coverage for the All Case Rates (ACR) benefits, to account for health inflation in the last decade. The increase applies to all health facilities—government and private.

PhilHealth also implemented the ACR-Based Global Budget<sup>132</sup> payment method to expedite the processing of claims and improve inpatient benefit payouts. This shall be implemented initially in HCPN demonstration sites.

As part of the government's support for those at risk of vehicular accidents and injuries, PhilHealth expanded the Z Benefits

for orthopedic implants in 2023. This policy reform provided an increase in coverage for orthopedic implant devices, reduced waiting time and delays in surgery, and enabled individuals to return to work as soon as they recover from the surgery.

To ease the patients' out-of-pocket expenses for the most common maintenance medicines, PhilHealth also developed the Guaranteed and Accessible Medications for Outpatient Treatment, branded as "GAMOT."

This standalone outpatient benefit package is designed to cover essential medicines. As of May 2024, the number of drugs and medicines covered by GAMOT more than doubled from 21 to 53. This shall likewise be implemented initially in HCPN demonstration sites.

**Table 3.2 PhilHealth's Benefits Scheduled for Rollout in 2024**

Benefit Package	Target Month of Release in 2024
COVID-19 Inpatient Benefit Package (Enhancement)	September
Outpatient Therapeutic Care Services for Severe Acute Malnutrition for Children 5 years and Below	September
PhilHealth Plus (Supplemental Benefits)	September
Services for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	October
Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (Severe)	November
Z Benefits for Chemotherapy (Lung, Liver, Ovarian, and Prostate Cancers) (Enhancement)	November
Ischemic Heart Disease with Myocardial Infarction (Enhancement)	November
Emergency Care	December
Cataract Extraction (Rationalization)	December
ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction	December
Post-Kidney Transplantation Medicines and Deceased Organ Donors; Cervical Cancer; and Open-heart surgeries (Tetralogy of Fallot, Ventricular Septal Defect, Coronary Artery Bypass Graft) (Z Benefits: Enhancement)	December
Peritoneal Dialysis (Z Benefits: Enhancement)	December

*Source: PhilHealth*

<sup>132</sup> A global budget is a funding mechanism that places a set amount of funding for a given time period, usually one fiscal year, for an identified set of services (Source: PhilHealth, July 03, 2024).

PhilHealth also enhanced the primary care benefits or the *Konsultasyong Sulit at Tama* (Konsulta) benefit package to cover and increase access to comprehensive outpatient services. As of June 2024, there were 2,797 accredited providers in the country. The Konsulta package's capitation rate was also adjusted from PhP750 to PhP1,700 to increase coverage for diagnostic tests, such as breast ultrasound and mammogram.

To further advance primary care benefits through the formation of PCPNs, four sandbox implementation sites in Baguio City and the provinces of Bataan, Quezon, and South Cotabato have demonstrated that frontloaded capitation payments enabled more agile spending via operationalization of their Special Health Funds.

Significant increases in Konsulta performance were demonstrated across the sites in terms of patient profiling, consultation, provision of laboratories and diagnostic tests, and dispensing of drugs and medicines.

As PhilHealth's response to the Philippines' commitment to the UN SDGs, it expanded and integrated identified SDG-related benefit packages for tuberculosis (TB), outpatient Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria, and animal bite in its primary care benefits. These benefits are also for initial implementation in select demonstration sites.

For the rest of CY 2024, PhilHealth shall continue to implement vital reforms for its benefit packages to increase coverage and protect Filipinos against expensive medical bills resulting in catastrophic spending (see Table 3.2).

**Implemented the Medical Assistance to Indigent and Financially Incapacitated Patients (MAIFIP) program.** The MAIFIP program aims to lessen the health-related financial burden on indigent and financially incapacitated patients.

To expand the program's impact, we increased its funding from PhP32.63 billion in 2023 to PhP58.09 billion in 2024 to reach more indigent and financially incapacitated patients.



*Kailangan ko kumuha ng medical test bago makabalik sa aking trabaho. Doon ko po nalaman na may sakit na po pala ako. Dahil sa bumagsak ako sa aking urinalysis, hanggang sa tuluyan na po akong hindi nakabalik sa trabaho... Dalawang beses kada linggo po ako nagda-dialysis, at nagpapasalamat po ako sa programa ng gobyerno kasi tinulungan po ako sa mga bayarin sa hospital. Sa katunayan ay zero po talaga, wala po akong binayaran - simula po sa konsultasyon, pagsusuri, at sa mga gamot po, wala po talaga."*

Sheila Ann Tan  
MAIFIP Beneficiary  
Zamboanga City

This increase enabled us to extend medical assistance to almost six million patients from January 2023 to May 2024.

### Ensured Adequate, Competent, and Committed Health Workforce<sup>133</sup>

Constructing and equipping health facilities and lowering the cost of health services are not enough to improve access to quality health care. Competent and committed HRH to staff our facilities and deliver needed health services form the foundation of an efficient and reliable health system.

Our country faces a sizable gap in HRH due to migration, challenging salary rates, and certain working conditions, among others.

To meet internationally comparable HRH to population ratios for the SDGs, our health sector requires 502,373 physicians, nurses, and midwives to cater to the needs of the population. As of June 2024, there were only 307,257 physicians, nurses, and midwives practicing in health facilities across the country. Thus, the country faces a gap of 195,116 physicians, nurses, and midwives.

Given these challenges, we prioritized the engagement, development, and welfare of HCWs.

### Implemented the National Health Workforce Support System (NHWSS).

To lessen the HRH gap in our country, the DOH implemented the NHWSS to support local public health systems in addressing their human resource needs.

As of May 2024, the DOH has hired 19,894 HRH with competitive salaries and benefits. This represents 18.28% of the total



*Gusto ko lang na ma-ensure na ma-visit ko talaga yung bawat sitio, especially yung mga malalayo na hindi talaga nakikita ng health workers. Iyon naman iyong goal natin as DTTB, makatulong tayo sa mga marginalized sectors natin. Ang importance po ng DTTB ay magkaroon po tayo ng accessible na quality health care para sa lahat po ng Pilipino, na wala tayong pinipili...mahirap man o mayaman."*

Dr. Maria Angela Tanjuatco  
DTTB  
Tanay, Rizal

health workforce in the PHC facilities and select HCPNs in the country.

### Doctors to the Barrios (DTTB) program.

Under the NHWSS, we continued to implement the DTTB program, which deploys physicians for three years in GIDAs. As of June 30, 2024, the DOH deployed DTTBs to 255 out of 258 or 99% of identified doctorless municipalities, leaving only three<sup>134</sup> doctorless municipalities.

133 DOH, July 01, 2024.

134 Pata and Banguingui in Sulu, and Languyan in Tawi-Tawi.



The President witnesses the ceremonial signing of the MOU for the implementation of the CCA program at the Malacañan Palace on September 28, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

### **Pre-Service Scholarship Program (PSSP).**

We continue to support existing DOH scholars aspiring to be doctors, midwives, pharmacists, and medical technologists through the PSSP until they finish their coursework. The program provides financial assistance to deserving students who will be rendering return service through the NHWSS.

As of May 31, 2024, we have had 1,415 scholars nationwide (i.e., 827 for medicine, 336 for midwifery, 136 for medical technology, and 116 for pharmacy).

**Capacitating HRH.**<sup>135</sup> In September 2023, we launched the Clinical Care Associates (CCA) program. Through this, underboard nursing graduates who are serving as CCAs in public and private hospitals are improving their skills and possibly become nurses through a structured free review program for the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination.

As of June 2024, 457 underboard nursing graduates were enrolled in the CCA program. The Commission on Higher

Education (CHED) is providing funding for this initiative that is targeting the enrollment of 1,000 underboard nursing graduates into the CCA program who may take the board exams in November 2024 and May and November 2025.

Moreover, to ensure that there are sufficient qualified faculty members to train more students enrolled in nursing programs, the CHED developed an enhanced one-year master's degree program in nursing to produce and increase the number of qualified clinical instructors and educators in nursing higher education institutions (HEIs). The program will commence in August 2024.

An initial 17 qualified HEIs were authorized to offer the enhanced master's program and CHED scholarships are available to interested faculty members.

To produce more doctors, the CHED has 3,600 scholarship slots under the Medical Scholarship and Return Service (MSRS) program for Academic Year (AY) 2023-2024.

135 CHED, June 26 and July 01, 2024.

These scholars signed return service agreements and will be serving in far-flung areas after they pass their licensure examinations. The MSRS program allows poor but deserving students access to medical education, thus, ensuring a continuous flow of doctors to underserved areas in the country.

We also increased the number of SUCs offering medical programs from 12 as of July 2022 to 22 SUCs as of June 2024. Ten of these schools were established during the first two years of this Administration.

#### **Released allowances and benefits.**

In keeping with the President's directive during last year's SONA, the government has settled all unpaid arrears for the COVID-19 Health Emergency Allowance (HEA) and other benefits that are due for HCWs. The DBM has released all HEA arrears on July 05, 2024, in accordance with the DOH's manifestation that the total final amount to be paid to qualified healthcare workers amounts to PhP27 billion.<sup>136</sup>

#### **Addressed Persistent Health Challenges**<sup>137</sup>

To achieve our goal of the *Bagong Pilipinas*, our people need to adopt positive health behaviors based on sound knowledge and healthy attitudes. Hence, we are undertaking the following:

**Intensified action to control the spread of TB and HIV/AIDS.** In 2023, the country was able to find and treat 612,534 people with TB, showing a 40% increase in cases promptly placed under treatment, thus decreasing its transmission. This achievement is due to increased Active Case Finding activities among high-risk



*Napakabigat po na responsibilidad bilang health worker na tatahakin muna po ang ilang mga bundok at mga batis bago po makarating sa Barangay Health Station. Dapat po buo ang loob, may tiwala sa sarili, malakas ang katawan, at makuha po ang simpatya ng mga tao doon. Pagdating po doon, ngiti po ang sasalubong sa'yo ng mga katutubo na hahatiran po ng pangkalusugang serbisyo. Nakabilang po ako doon sa Special Risk Allowance at tsaka sa Health Emergency Assistance. Salamat po nang marami sa government natin."*

Janes Ambalesa  
Midwife  
Infanta, Pangasinan

groups and high prevalence areas, and improved reporting by the private sector.

In addition, use of new technologies—mobile vans with ultraportable chest X-rays with AI and rapid TB molecular diagnostic tools—were also expanded. These

136 DBM, July 05, 2024.

137 DOH, July 01, 2024.

greatly improved the turnaround time for diagnosis and allowed access even among hard-to-reach areas. A total of 16 mobile vans were deployed to 15 regions in 2023.

To enhance TB patient treatment adherence, the DOH released in December 2023 the guidelines<sup>138</sup> for shorter and safer treatment regimen for drug-resistant TB among adults. This lessened the duration of treatment from nine to 18 months to just six months. As of May 2024, 2,395 people have been enrolled in the shorter regimen for drug-resistant TB. As of June 2024, we also released a policy that shortens treatment of children with non-severe TB from six months to four months.

On March 24, 2023, the DOH launched the Philippine Acceleration Action Plan for TB (PAAP-TB). The PAAP-TB emphasizes multisectoral collaboration to address the complex challenges of TB and achieve a TB-free Philippines.

On HIV/AIDS, the DOH is transitioning to the newer and safer regimen (tenofovir, lamivudine, and dolutegravir), which decreases the level of HIV in the body to enable one's immune system to work better.

We are also implementing the rapid HIV diagnostic algorithm (rHIVda) expansion plan to decentralize HIV confirmatory testing. We are targeting the establishment of one rHIVda site for every province and highly urbanized city. During this Administration, we have established an additional 54 treatment hubs and 90 diagnostic sites nationwide. As of June 2024, we now have 224 treatment

hubs and 119 diagnostic sites, ensuring that every region has at least one of each facility.

In terms of HIV prevention, the DOH is providing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). We expanded from 57 PrEP dispensing sites in 2022 to 103 sites as of April 2024, enrolling nearly 36,000 clients.<sup>139</sup>

#### ***Enhanced mental health and well-being.***

On October 12, 2023, the DOH launched the Philippine Council for Mental Health Strategic Plan for 2024-2028. This plan takes a comprehensive approach to preventing and managing Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use (MNS) disorders.

Simultaneously, PhilHealth introduced an outpatient benefits package for mental health services. This package covers general and specialty mental health services, with rates ranging from PhP9,000 to PhP16,000. In alignment with this effort, the Medicines Access Program for Mental Health (MAP-MH) ensures the availability of essential mental health drugs in the communities.

In 2022, there were 362 MAP-MH access sites nationwide offering 30 essential medicines for MNS disorders. We increased these access sites to 845 by the end of 2023, which enabled us to serve 225,000 service users.<sup>140</sup>

138 DOH Department Circular No. 2023-0552, titled, "Advisory on the 2023 Key Updates on the Current Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis Treatment Guidelines."

139 DOH, June 30, 2024.

140 DOH, June 30, 2024.

# Providing Quality, Relevant Education and Training



SHS students of Rizal High School in Pasig City collaborate during an activity in one of their science laboratory classes.

Photo Credit: DepEd

I have always championed education as a critical key to addressing poverty in the country. We are blessed with a vibrant population teeming with raw talent and we rely on our education system to harness our young people's great potential. Our ultimate goal for the Filipino youth is for them to actively contribute to nation-building, to the *Bagong Pilipinas*.

The recent series of National Achievement Tests reflected the work that we still need to do to improve our learners' performance. Only less than half of Grade 6, 10, and 12 learners have reached the nearly proficient level and above in problem solving, information literacy, and critical thinking, with Grade 12 registering the lowest percentages among the three grade levels.

The low ranking of the Philippines in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicates the need to catch up with our neighbours if we want to produce students who are globally competitive and responsive to industry demands.

In addition, the Year One Report of the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) revealed the issues afflicting our educational system—from early childhood care and development, basic education, higher education, teacher education, technical-vocational education and training (TVET) to governance and financing.<sup>141</sup>

141 DepEd, June 28, 2024.

To address these learning gaps, we continue to heavily invest in education. For FY 2024, PhP903.83 billion was allocated for the DepEd, TESDA, CHED, and SUCs. This is 21.75% higher than the PhP742.37 billion budgetary allocation for these agencies in FY 2022.<sup>142</sup>

### Transformed Basic Education<sup>143</sup>

On April 25, 2024, we adopted the DepEd's Basic Education Development Plan 2030 and MATATAG Agenda as our national policy and plan for basic education. Under the MATATAG Agenda, the government had undertaken the following:

**Made the curriculum relevant to the nation's needs.** On August 10, 2023, we launched the MATATAG K to 10 curriculum, which aims to decongest the current curriculum by reducing learning areas and focusing on foundational skills, such as numeracy and literacy. Meanwhile, the SHS curriculum is still undergoing review.

We continue to introduce interventions to address the low reading proficiency levels of learners. In August 2023, the DSWD piloted

the *Tara, Basa!* Program, which also aims to provide job opportunities for college students as tutors to elementary non-readers. These students also serve as youth development workers (YDWs) to facilitate *Nanay-Tatay* Teacher Sessions, wherein parents and guardians undergo sessions to strengthen parent-child relationship.<sup>144</sup>



### Tara, Basa! Program Accomplishments (As of June 13, 2024)



**73,370**  
learners and parents  
participated in the reading  
sessions and *Nanay-Tatay*  
Teacher Sessions\*

**13,395\*\***  
college students  
trained as tutors for elementary  
learners and YDWs for  
*Nanay-Tatay* Teacher Sessions

Source: DSWD

\*During the program's pilot implementation  
from August to November 2023

\*\*7,915 college students trained as tutors and YDWs during the  
program's pilot implementation



*Nakapag-decongest po iyon [MATATAG K to 10 curriculum] ng curriculum. Sa totoo lang, tutok po kami ngayon. Tutok po kami sa numeracy, literacy, at saka iyong socioemotional skills po ng bata. Alam po natin na sa Kindergarten, ito po iyong foundation ng bata."*

Jovy Francisco  
Teacher  
Dampalit Integrated School, Malabon City

142 DBM, June 28, 2024.

143 DepEd, June 28, 2024.

144 DSWD, June 29, 2024.



Further, starting January 12, 2024, Catch-up Fridays were implemented across elementary and secondary schools nationwide. As part of the National Learning Recovery Program, we utilized Catch-up Fridays to improve our learners' literacy skills and foster values, health, and peace education.



A teacher answers the questions of a learner during the kick-off of the Catch-up Fridays at the Pinagbuhatan Elementary School in Pasig City on January 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: DepEd

**Built more school infrastructure and facilities.** We continuously strived to improve the learning experience of our learners, even those in far-flung areas through the provision of learner-friendly classrooms and other facilities. By delivering educational tools and facilities even in the most remote places of the country, we bridge the gap in access to quality basic education and leave no one behind.

From July 2022 to March 2024, we completed the construction of 12,562 new classrooms and repair of 5,081 classrooms. Further, we completed the construction of 193 Last Mile Schools (LMS) and electrification of 395 schools within the same period.



Manicbel Primary School (an LMS) in Sallapadan, Abra. LMS are school facilities located in GIDAs or conflict-affected areas. They usually have less than five teachers and 100 learners, more than 75% of whom are indigenous peoples.

Photo Credit: DepEd

**Brought relevant educational materials to schools.** Access to quality educational materials is equally important. As of May 31, 2024, we delivered 8.48 million textbooks to equip learners and aid them in their study.

To help connect our schools with the vast library of information online, we installed fiber internet connection in 305 schools in GIDAs. Since wired internet connection is impossible in some places, we provided very small aperture terminals to 2,000 remote schools and Starlink satellite internet connection to 42 schools, including 16 LMS.



Students of Amarao National High School in Santa Cruz, Ilocos Sur utilize the eLearning Cart provided by the DepEd on May 15, 2024.

Photo Credit: DepEd

Under the DepEd Computerization Program, we procured 2,544 eLearning Carts for our public schools in 2023 and 1,655 eLearning Carts in 2024. Each eLearning Cart consists of 46 laptops to help learners access the world of knowledge available outside the classroom. We also equipped 65,570 teachers with laptops for more effective teaching.

**Supported learners' welfare.** We provided 4.75 million learners tuition subsidies through our voucher programs from July 2022 to April 2024. By subsidizing their private school education, we are also addressing congestion in public schools, resulting in a relatively more comfortable classroom experience.

Consistent with our efforts to improve the well-being of our learners, we are also actively addressing concerns on their safety. As of May 31, 2024, we resolved 138 cases of child abuse through the DepEd's Learner Rights and Protection Office.

We are supporting sports development in schools to instill in our learners the concepts of community-building and camaraderie. As of May 24, 2024, we provided 2,279 schools with sports equipment. Further, we revived the *Palarong Pambansa* after a four-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 7,485 student-athletes competed in the 2023 *Palaro*, which was held from July 29 to August 05, 2023 in Marikina City.

**Promoted teachers' welfare.** Critical to the delivery of quality basic education is the promotion of the welfare of our teaching personnel. As of May 31, 2024, 17,195 teaching positions out of the 19,209 positions created were filled up to distribute the teaching workload.

On January 26, 2024, DepEd Order No. 002, s. 2024 was issued, which provided for the immediate removal of administrative tasks from public school teachers. As of June 05, 2024, we deployed 8,357 administrative staff or 98.32% of the 8,500 administrative positions created. On May 28, 2024, the DBM approved the creation of another 5,000 non-teaching positions so that our educators can focus more on teaching their students.<sup>145</sup>

We also improved the coverage of the Special Hardship Allowance (SHA)<sup>146</sup> by lowering the baseline Hardship Index from 0.37 to 0.33. This resulted in an additional 16,532 teachers receiving the allowance.

On May 31, 2024, the *Kabalikat sa Pagtuturo Act*, which aims to provide PhP10,000 annual allowance starting SY 2025-2026 to our teachers for the purchase of teaching supplies and materials and other incidental expenses, was enacted. This measure would eliminate the out-of-pocket expenses of our teachers.

We also continue to upskill and reskill our teachers to keep them at par with 21<sup>st</sup> century standards.



In 2023,  
**713,885** or **79.32%**  
out of **900,000** public school  
teachers and school leaders  
underwent training programs.

145 DBM, July 05, 2024.

146 The SHA is given monthly to classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools and school heads or administrators exposed to extreme difficulties and hazards, such as difficulty in commuting to the place of work.



The President ceremonially signs the *Kabalikat sa Pagtuturo* Act at the Malacañan Palace on June 03, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

### Improved TVET's Responsiveness to the Needs of Industries<sup>147</sup>

The Filipino skilled worker should be able to adapt to the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century industry. Along this line, we continue to strengthen our TVET systems to improve and harness the skills and competencies of our workforce.

On August 25, 2023, we launched the National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan 2023-2028. This plan serves as our guidepost in the implementation of TVET programs in the country until the end of my Administration.

From July 2022 to May 2024, more than 90% or 2.75 million out of 3.05 million enrollees graduated from TVET programs. Of this number, 997,033 graduated from the 178 TESDA Training Institutions nationwide. Further, 749,342 of the graduates were beneficiaries of the TESDA's scholarship programs.

To broaden the TVET's reach and encourage lifelong learning, we actively

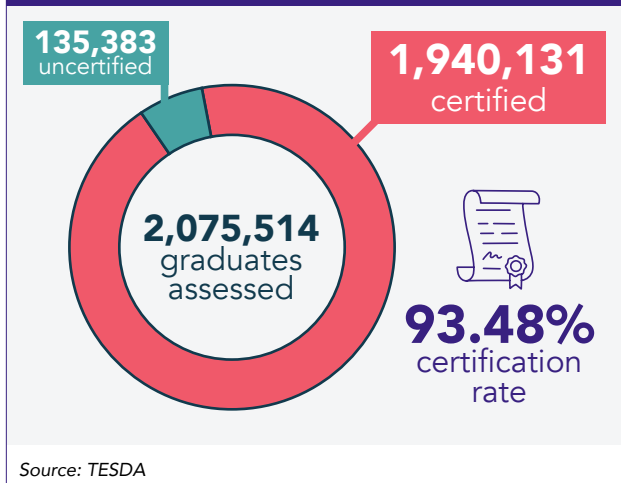
promoted the TESDA Online Program. This web-based platform offers free and open online courses allowing learners to access TVET learning materials at their own pace and convenience. From July 2022 to May 2024, around 67% or 1.97 million out of 2.93 million registered learners completed at least one course under this program.

To ensure their employability, we assess our graduates so they could secure certifications (see *Figure 3.3*). A study in 2023 found that 79% of the 2022 TVET graduates successfully secured employment.

In November 2023, the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) was revised to include Junior High School certificate and SHS diploma under PQF Levels 1 and 2, respectively. With these revisions, SHS graduates will be equipped with the competencies to either join the workforce or pursue higher education.

147 TESDA, June 21, 2024.

Figure 3.3 **Certification Rate of TVET Graduates**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



### Produced Inclusive, Equitable, Quality Tertiary Programs<sup>148</sup>

In the *Bagong Pilipinas*, the Filipino youth can think critically and be brave visionaries of our country. To achieve this, we continue to offer wide opportunities for our children

to access quality higher education through the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (UAQTEA).

In the first semester of AY 2023-2024, we provided free higher education to 2.25 million beneficiaries in SUCs and CHED-recognized local universities and colleges. Since July 2022, 532,398 young Filipinos graduated under the free higher education program.

We also continued to provide support to college students through other UAQTEA programs, such as the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES)<sup>149</sup> and *Tulong Dunong* Program (TDP),<sup>150</sup> as well as other CHED scholarship programs (see *Figure 3.4*).

Similar to our efforts to improve the welfare of our teachers in basic education, we also implemented reforms to recognize the hard work of our educators in SUCs. Through DBM-CHED Joint Circular No. 3<sup>151</sup> issued in



*Marami pong challenges kasi babae ka, bata ka pa, and you're doing construction. Ini-explain ko na lang sa client na, 'alam ko naman po na sa panahon ngayon, ang babae, kaya na lahat.' Meron din po akong mga certifications na nagpapatunay na competent akong gumawa, na kaya ko 'tong gawin."*

Rheajane Dicdiquin-Heah  
Construction Painting National Certificate (NC) II,  
Carpentry NC II, and Scaffolding NC II graduate  
Pasig City

148 CHED, June 26, 2024.

149 The TES is given to qualified students enrolled in CHED-recognized public and private HEIs as financial aid for their college education. Each TES grantee receives PhP20,000 per AY.

150 The TDP is given to enrolled college students who are not TES grantees. Each TDP grantee receives PhP7,500 per semester.

151 Titled, "Guidelines on the Reclassification of Faculty Positions in State Universities and Colleges."

Figure 3.4 **Beneficiaries of Other CHED Student Assistance Programs**  
(July 2022 to April 2024)



**990,351 grantees\***  
under the TES



**474,122 grantees\***  
under the TDP



**21,346 scholars**  
under the CHED Merit Scholarship Program



**6,707 grantees**  
under the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund–Grants-in-Aid for Higher Education Program



**3,136 scholars**  
under the Scholarship Program for Coconut Farmers and their Families



**408 scholars**  
under the CHED Scholarship Program for Future Statisticians

\*Includes continuing grantees

Source: CHED

2022, 12,304 faculty members in 111 SUCs were reclassified or promoted through a merit-based faculty promotion process, strengthening the quality of instruction and research in SUCs.

We are also boosting the global academic reputation of Philippine HEIs to allow them to benchmark on teaching, research, public service functions, and their special projects with other universities all over the world.

As of June 2024, 87 Philippine HEIs were included in various world university rankings, a significant increase from the 52 HEIs reported during my SONA in 2023.

On April 29, 2024, the Mabalacat City College (MCC) received the Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year Award in the Times Higher Education Awards Asia 2024 for its smart classrooms. This initiative provides improved access to quality college education for its students, especially for persons with disabilities and working students. The MCC stood out amid tough competition against world ranking universities in this category, such as the Chiang Mai University of Thailand and National University of Singapore.



The MCC receives the Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year Award during the Times Higher Education Awards Asia 2024 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on April 29, 2024.

Photo Credit: MCC

The performance of Philippine HEIs in different ranking bodies shows that they continue to benchmark with the best universities in the world, adopt innovative practices, and continue to improve the quality of their teaching, research, and public service activities.

# Fostering Secure Employment and Livelihood



A jobseeker is interviewed during the 122<sup>nd</sup> Labor Day Job Fair held in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan on May 01, 2024.

Photo Credit: DOLE

Vital to our anti-poverty program is the provision of meaningful jobs to our people.

Thus, we encouraged investments that would create more jobs in the country (see *Chapter 1*), updated our basic education curriculum, improved access to higher education, and strengthened the delivery of technical and vocational education for our *kababayans*.

To consolidate and guide these strategies, we approved the Labor and Employment Plan (LEP) 2023-2028 on August 08, 2023. The LEP is steering us toward our goal of providing sustainable work and employment opportunities; ensuring labor

governance that respects all fundamental principles and rights at work as well as international labor standards; and fostering equitable and inclusive social protection.

We also ensured that professional standards and licensure examinations are attuned to international standards. We are implementing seven ASEAN mutual recognition arrangements (MRA)<sup>152</sup> and two other agreements;<sup>153</sup> and pursuing the establishment of 32 international linkages, collaborative partnerships, and initiatives with ASEAN Member States and other partner and counterpart agencies and organizations.<sup>154</sup>

152 These facilitated the mobility of the Philippine labor market to destination countries (and vice versa) by establishing more transparent, predictable, and formalized migration flows. These include the adoption of best practices on standards and qualifications mutually beneficial to both parties.

153 (i) MOU between the Professional Regulation Commission and Hawaii Department of Health, and (ii) Philippine MRA on Interior Design Services with Indonesia.

154 DOLE, June 25, 2024.

## Improved Employment Facilitation<sup>155</sup>

To increase the employability of our workforce and expand access to employment opportunities, the government continued to work with the private sector to help bridge the gaps in the labor force.

With the help of the private sector, we implemented employment facilitation programs that linked people to employment opportunities (see Figure 3.5).



*Wala gyud ko kahibawo nga Job Fair diay. Nagdala rako ug payong pagsulod naku sa mall. Pag-gawas naku, naa nakoy trabaho. Last week nanimpalad ko ug ari sa Cebu City para makakita ug mas maayo na employment opportunity."*

*I didn't know it was a job fair. I just went inside the mall with my umbrella, and then I got a job as I exited the mall. I came to Cebu City last week to look for employment opportunities.*

Ariel Montejo  
Labor Day Job Fair, Cebu

Figure 3.5 **Employment Facilitation Initiatives**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)

# JOB FAIR

## 2,985

job fairs conducted nationwide,  
with **123,565** individuals  
hired on the spot



## 5.20 million

**qualified applicants**  
placed in various  
employment opportunities  
out of **5.26 million** job seekers



## 4.5 million

**job seekers recorded,**  
**4.5 million** vacant positions from  
**67,997** employers posted



## 8,029

career development  
support activities conducted,  
covering **1.1 million students and**  
**parents** from **5,882** universities

Source: DOLE

We also provided school-to-work transitions to the youth to help them access gainful employment (see Figure 3.6).



## Protected the Rights and Promoted the Welfare of Workers<sup>156</sup>

From July 2023 to April 2024, 32 wage orders were issued by various Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs). The wage increases ranged from PhP30 to PhP89 per day for private sector workers and PhP400 to PhP1,500 per month for domestic workers. The BARMM also issued wage orders for private establishments with a PhP20 increase.

We also implemented programs to promote the occupational safety and health (OSH) of our labor force in both the public and private sectors (see Figure 3.7). This initiative is consistent with the commitment laid down under the LEP 2023-2028 to ensure labor market governance that respects all fundamental principles and rights at work, international labor standards, and human rights.

The government, through the DOLE, effectively managed and resolved labor disputes to maintain, sustain, and improve sound and stable labor-management relations. We settled 94,802 out of 108,438 cases and awarded a total amount of PhP6.54 billion worth of damages benefitting 120,514 workers.



156 DOLE, June 25, 2024.



## Provided Social Protection to Vulnerable Workers<sup>157</sup>

Through the DOLE, we continue to provide welfare assistance programs to displaced and vulnerable workers, including persons with work-related disabilities.

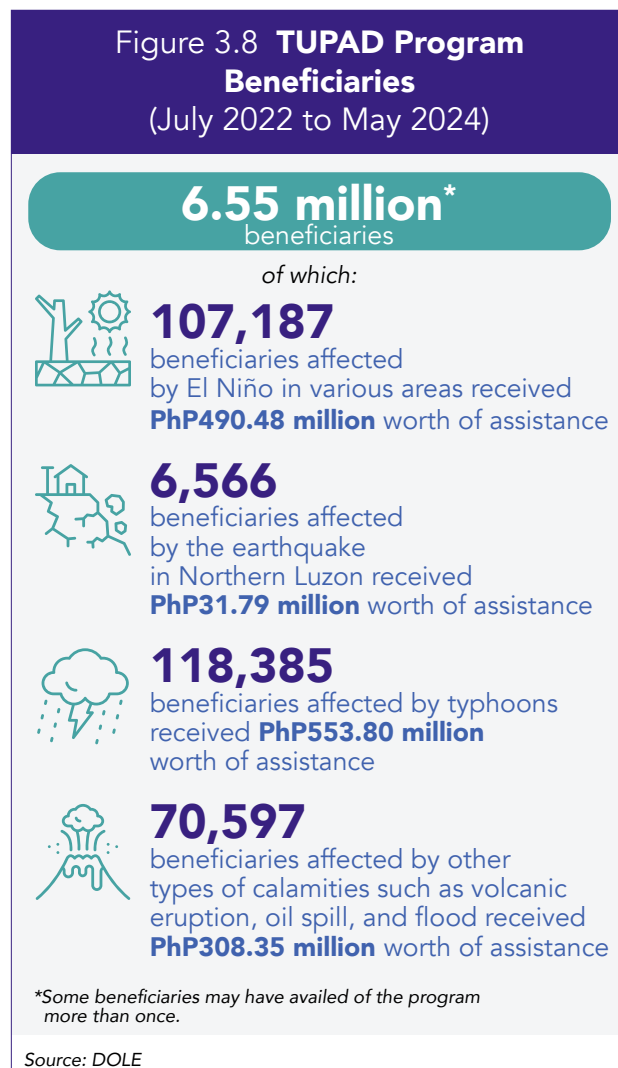
To complement this initiative, we implemented programs that provide support in times of disaster and calamities. From July 2022 to May 2024, 6.55 million beneficiaries received emergency employment assistance through the *Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Displaced/Disadvantaged Workers* (TUPAD) Program (see Figure 3.8).

This enabled the beneficiaries to contribute to improving their respective communities.

We intensified the resilience of MSMEs through the proactive implementation of the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP)-*Kabuhayan*. The program provides livelihood assistance ranging from PhP10,000 to PhP30,000. It enables the recipients to transition from pure welfare recipients to active and productive economic players. From July 2022 to May 2024, 206,140 beneficiaries received assistance amounting to PhP3.43 billion under the DILP-*Kabuhayan*.

The DOLE, through the Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC), continues to improve the benefits of persons with work-related disabilities. The ECC, in cooperation with the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and Social Security System (SSS), released compensation to 429,133 beneficiaries amounting to PhP2.81 billion from July 2022 to September 2023.

Figure 3.8 **TUPAD Program Beneficiaries**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



DOLE Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma, along with DTI Secretary Pascual, DILG Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr., Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Secretary Jose Rizalino Acuzar, DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, and DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan, presents the scale model of the 50-hectare Workers Rehabilitation Center Complex to the President at the Malacañan Palace on May 01, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

157 DOLE, June 25, 2024.

The ECC also approved policy issuances to expand and improve our workforce's access to employees' compensation (EC) benefits (see *Figure 3.9*).

**Figure 3.9 ECC Policy Issuances**

**Board Resolution No. 23-02-02**

(February 16, 2023)

Approving the Progressive Increase in the Minimum Daily Income Benefit for EC Temporary Total Disability in the Private Sector from PhP110 to PhP120 and PhP150 in 2023 and 2025, respectively

**Board Resolution No. 22-12-36**

(December 16, 2022)

Imposing a Lower Penalty of 6% per Annum to Delinquent SSS and GSIS Contributions

**Board Resolution No. 22-08-20**

(August 12, 2022)

Approving the Increase in the Daily Income Benefit for EC Temporary Total Disability in the Public Sector

Source: DOLE

## Ensured Compliance with International Conventions<sup>158</sup>

Compliance with international conventions and instruments is critical in ensuring the ability of the country to attract investments.

On February 20, 2024, the Philippines deposited with the International Labour Organization (ILO) the instrument of ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention (Convention No. 190).

The Philippines became the 38<sup>th</sup> country in the world, and the first Asian country, to ratify Convention No. 190. This Convention affirms the fundamental right of individuals to a workplace free from violence and harassment.

I also issued EO No. 23, s. 2023,<sup>159</sup> which created the Inter-Agency Committee for the Protection of the Freedom of Association and Right to Organize of Workers. Chaired by the Executive Secretary, the body was tasked to ensure more efficient and effective coordination of all government agencies concerned in the investigation and prosecution of cases arising from alleged violations of the rights of workers to organize, among others.

Relatedly, on April 26, 2024, the Inter-Agency Committee approved the Joint Guidelines on promoting the effective exercise of workers of their freedom of association, including the right to organize, and civil liberties.

Through the Inter-Agency Committee and the DOLE, a referral system now directs reported violations of freedom of association to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).



DOLE Undersecretary Benedicto Ernesto Bitonio Jr. presents the ratified Convention No. 190 to ILO Deputy Director-General Celeste Drake at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva on February 20, 2024.

Photo Credit: DOLE

158 DOLE, June 25, 2024.

159 Titled, "Reinforcing and Protecting the Freedom of Association and Right to Organize of Workers, Constituting an Inter-Agency Committee to Strengthen Coordination and Expedite the Investigation, Prosecution, and Resolution of Cases for Violations Thereof, Among Others."

# Providing Decent Housing



The President leads the turnover of housing units to residents affected by the Manila Bay rehabilitation in Bacoor City, Cavite on January 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

Our goal is to establish resilient and inclusive communities. In the pursuit of this vision, we are exerting all efforts to enable Filipinos to acquire safe, quality, and affordable shelter, and greater access to home financing.

## Supported Households in Acquiring their Own Homes<sup>160</sup>

From July 2022 to April 2024, the national government allocated PhP11.59 billion for the construction of 66,016 housing units.<sup>161</sup>

The government also offers affordable housing loans, making it easier for Filipino families to own their dream homes.

From July 2022 to May 2024, about PhP241 billion loans were released under the Pag-IBIG Fund Housing Loan. The recipients used these loans to purchase

new homes or improve their existing homes, translating to 189,101 housing units.

The Pag-IBIG Fund further maintained its status as one of the country's best-performing financial institutions in 2023.

The highest annual housing loan since the Pag-IBIG's inception was released in 2023, amounting to PhP126.04 billion. This amount helped 96,848 Pag-IBIG Fund members gain new and better homes.



## 189,101 housing units

purchased and improved through the Pag-IBIG Fund Housing Loan (July 2022-May 2024)

<sup>160</sup> DHSUD, June 27 and July 05, 2024; and Pag-IBIG Fund, June 24, 2024.

<sup>161</sup> Housing production efforts are led by the National Housing Authority (NHA) and Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC).

The National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC) ensures the sustainability of affordable housing loans through the operation of a secondary market for home mortgages.

From July 2022 to June 2024, the NHMFC bought PhP5.18 billion worth of mortgages and bonds issued by the private sector. The mortgages purchased were eventually sold back to the public.

### **Continued the Implementation of the *Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino Housing (4PH) Program***<sup>162</sup>

We launched the 4PH as the government's flagship program on housing. It seeks to make housing more accessible and affordable for the beneficiaries.

The program involves in-city resettlement or relocation of informal settler families (ISFs) within the same area. With this mode of resettlement, relocated families will not lose access to their sources of living.

The program also aims to reduce beneficiaries' monthly amortizations through the provision of interest support or subsidy.

As of June 2024, more than 40 ongoing 4PH projects across the country would generate around 142,600 housing units.

With the Pag-IBIG Fund's full support, the implementation of the 4PH program continues to gain momentum.

In December 2022, it allocated PhP250 billion in developmental loan for the program. Of this figure, PhP7.24 billion was approved for the development of nine projects

across the country, which will provide more than 8,500 families with their own homes.

The Pag-IBIG Fund has also approved PhP12 billion and PhP929 million in revolving credit lines for the 4PH projects under the NHA and SHFC, respectively. The credit lines will finance the construction of around 9,000 housing units across the country.

### **Pursued the Relocation of ISFs**<sup>163</sup>

The government, through the NHA, continues to undertake the prompt resettlement of ISFs and calamity victims into safe and quality homes and communities. From July 2022 to April 2024, the NHA completed almost 32,000 housing units for the benefit of ISFs living in danger zones and those affected by infrastructure projects, the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay, regional resettlement, and calamities.

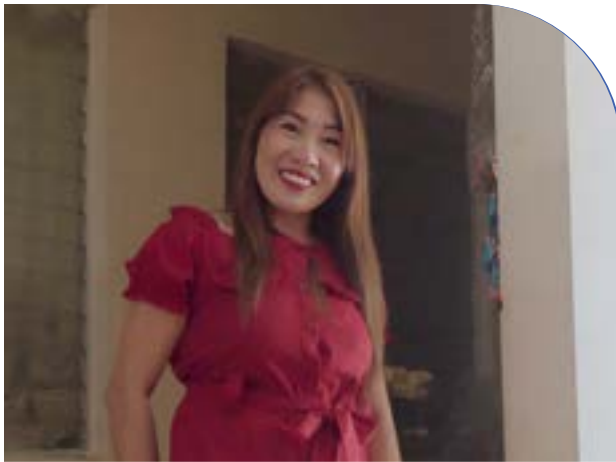
From July 2022 to May 2024, the SHFC also released PhP6.34 billion worth of housing assistance to 35,428 ISFs.

Meanwhile, the GSIS is stepping up its Lease with Option to Buy (LWOB) program, which aims to offer the informal occupants of GSIS' housing units a chance to legalize their stay by renting or eventually purchasing the property.

As of May 31, 2024, the GSIS has more than 12,000 available properties and assets nationwide for the LWOB program. The GSIS has approved almost 2,700 LWOB-related applications.

162 DHSUD, June 27 and July 05, 2024; and Pag-IBIG Fund, June 24, 2024.

163 DHSUD, June 27, 2024; NHA, June 24, 2024; GSIS, June 25, 2024; and NHA, Correspondence, June 20 and July 03, 2024.



*Yung lugar namin na inalisán, bahaing lugar yun, nasa gilid kami ng tubig. Kapag bumagyo, nag-aalala kami na babaha. Ngayon, di na kami nag-aalala. Ang maganda po sa nilipatan namin, malapit kami sa school, sa palengke, may police station.”*

Rita Alborte  
NHA Housing Beneficiary  
St. Gregory Homes, Malabon City



Almost 1,400 housing units under the St. Gregory Homes Housing Project in Barangay Panghulo, Malabon City were turned over in March 2023.

*Photo Credit and Source: NHA*

### Provided Livelihood Opportunities and Other Assistance to Housing Beneficiaries<sup>164</sup>

This Administration also assured that the housing beneficiaries are provided with livelihood and other forms of housing assistance (see Figure 3.10).

We are working for the Filipino family. The DHSUD and all its key shelter agencies remain focused on our goal of providing Filipino families with safe, quality, and affordable homes.

Figure 3.10 Assistance to Housing Program Beneficiaries and Pag-IBIG Fund Members (July 2022 to May 2024)



Sources: NHA and Pag-IBIG Fund

164 NHA, June 24, 2024; and Pag-IBIG Fund, June 24, 2024.

# Way Forward

Much has been done to promote social development for poverty reduction and nation-building. We have invested heavily in social protection and social safety nets to assist the poor; in health and education to make them more productive members of our society; and in employment, livelihood and housing so that they can actualize their dreams for themselves and their families.

However, we are cognizant of the challenges we face. We need the united, concerted efforts of everyone working tirelessly toward a *Bagong Pilipinas* to significantly reduce poverty in our country.

We are fully implementing this year our flagship program, *Walang Gutom 2027*, to combat poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.

We are enhancing and intensifying the implementation of our existing poverty reduction programs, such as the 4Ps and EPAHP program. We are looking into automatically adjusting the cash grants for 4Ps beneficiaries to cope with the effects of inflation.

We are also studying ways to streamline livelihood, employment, and feeding programs of various agencies to avoid duplication of programs and to maximize our assistance so that more can benefit.

Our healthcare system is a work in progress. We must sustain the headway gained by the country against the pandemic.

Considering that the most cost-efficient way to ensure the health of all Filipinos is through preventive health care, we are focusing on bringing quality PHC to more families and communities.

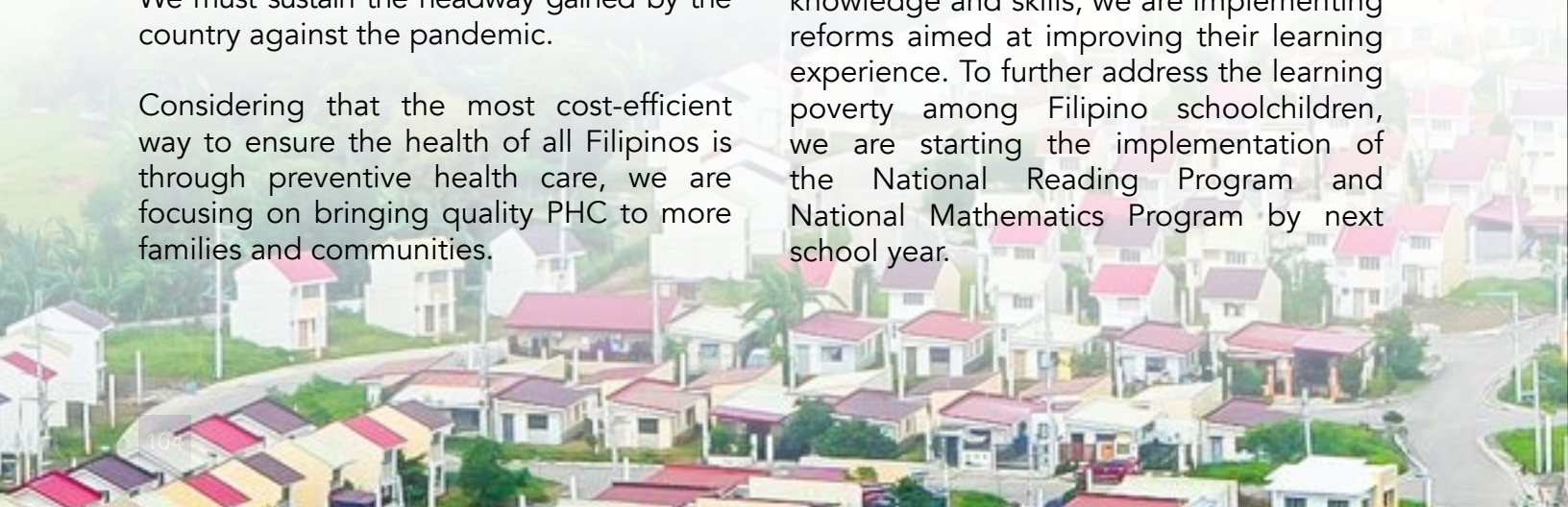
We are proceeding as planned with the construction of PCFs, regional specialty centers, BUCAS Centers, and the deployment of mobile PCFs. We look forward to the completion of various health facilities, such as the Philippine Cancer Center and University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital Cancer Center, which aim to provide quality cancer treatments at par with international standards.

We are investing and digitalizing our healthcare system to increase our citizens' access to health care services and make services more efficient.

We continue to find ways to bring down the cost of health care and medicines in collaboration with the private sector. We are ensuring that PhilHealth is paying more health benefits for Filipinos, on time and with better support value.

We see to it that PhilHealth's enhancements on benefits, supported by a strengthened IT system, communications and marketing, shall be implemented as scheduled. We are also implementing measures to address the shortage of health care professionals in our country.

Our education system should be in step with the fast-changing world. To keep our learners equipped with 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills, we are implementing reforms aimed at improving their learning experience. To further address the learning poverty among Filipino schoolchildren, we are starting the implementation of the National Reading Program and National Mathematics Program by next school year.



Meanwhile, for 2024, we are targeting to cover 180,716 *Tara, Basa!* beneficiaries in seven regions.

As part of our efforts to provide a conducive learning environment for our learners, we are reverting to the old calendar starting SY 2025-2026 to protect our children from the intense heat during the summer months.

In addition, we are pursuing in 2024 the construction of 12,445 classrooms, 372 LMS, and other facilities; and provision of 380,236 laptops for learners, 106,890 laptops for teachers, and other learning materials, such as textbooks. We are continuing this initiative until 2028.

We are working to embed TVET in all SHS tracks to expand its role in the country's education system through a pilot implementation in September 2024. This move will provide our learners with competencies, which will allow them to access job opportunities after high school.

We are continuing to address the concerns raised in the EDCOM II report and PISA to continually improve access and quality of education.

In the medium-term, addressing skills mismatches through the alignment of basic and higher education and TVET systems to the demands of the labor market remain a priority.

We are strengthening our collaboration with industries, higher education and technical vocational institutions, and other stakeholders to identify industries with high demand, provide efficient job-skills

matching services, and deliver upskilling and reskilling services to respond to the needs of industries.


The approval of the IRR of the *Trabaho Para sa Bayan* Act on March 12, 2024 holds promise of creating sustainable employment opportunities and fostering inclusive growth for the people.

We are reviewing the minimum wage rates in the regions, with due consideration of the impact of inflation, among others, within 60 days prior to the anniversary of their latest wage order.

The National Wages and Productivity Commission is reviewing its rules and ensuring that the RTWPBs can maintain a regular and predictable schedule of wage review and issuance to reduce uncertainty and enhance fairness for all stakeholders.

On housing, we anticipate the completion of more housing projects throughout the country in the coming years.

The government assures that these housing projects are being built using modern technologies to guarantee a durable and stable home that every Filipino family deserves. The DHSUD and key shelter agencies are working with sustained vigor until we meet the housing demands of our people.



NHA housing project in Naic, Cavite

Photo Credit: PCO

Tubbataha Reef  
Photo Credit: DOT



# CHAPTER 04



# Protecting the Integrity of the Environment Toward a Climate Resilient Nation

Climate change is the greatest threat affecting our nation and our people. It is the first truly global threat that requires action from every single one of us. There is no greater shared responsibility than caring for the environment. We understand that we can only truly prosper if we safeguard the integrity of our environment and natural resources and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Thus, we remain committed to our responsibilities to protect, preserve, and manage our country's natural resources.

The Philippines accepts its share in the collective responsibility of addressing climate change. I directed all departments and agencies to ensure that climate change will be an important criterion in our integral national policies.



*Let us all unite and channel all our energies into building a safer, stronger, [and] more resilient Philippines for ourselves and for future generations."*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
2023 *Handa Pilipinas* Visayas Leg  
Opening Ceremony  
November 08, 2023



The President delivers his message during the 2023 *Handa Pilipinas* Visayas Leg Opening Ceremony in Tacloban City, Leyte on November 08, 2023.

Photo Credit: DOST

We made bold decisions toward cleaner and renewable energy (RE). As one of the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change, we ensured that our voice was heard in global climate negotiations and actions. Our domestic climate budget substantially increased while we ensured access to international climate financing. Boosting our resiliency and speeding up disaster response also remained our top priorities.

As I have stressed during the UN General Assembly in September 2022, how we address climate change will be the true test of our time.

In this fight, we are certain of one thing: our strong resolve to work for a better and more sustainable nation that we will pass on to future generations.

## Ensuring a Sustainable Energy Future



The President, with DOE Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla and officials of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), inspects the Bacolod Substation prior to the Ceremonial Energization of the Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) 230-kilovolt (kV) Backbone Project on April 08, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

This Administration is committed to ensuring energy security in the country by 2028. We shall drive our nation's energy agenda forward and forge a more sustainable future for our people. Our vision is a *Bagong Pilipinas* powered by clean energy and a thriving community benefiting from energy systems that are reliable, accessible, and affordable for all.

### Unified and Improved the Transmission System<sup>165</sup>

Investing in the energy transmission system is highly critical to bridge power and progress. This Administration is working closely with the NGCP to ensure that the much-needed expansion and improvement of the country's transmission system will be done in a timely manner.

165 DOE, June 25, 2024.

**Unified the National Grid.**

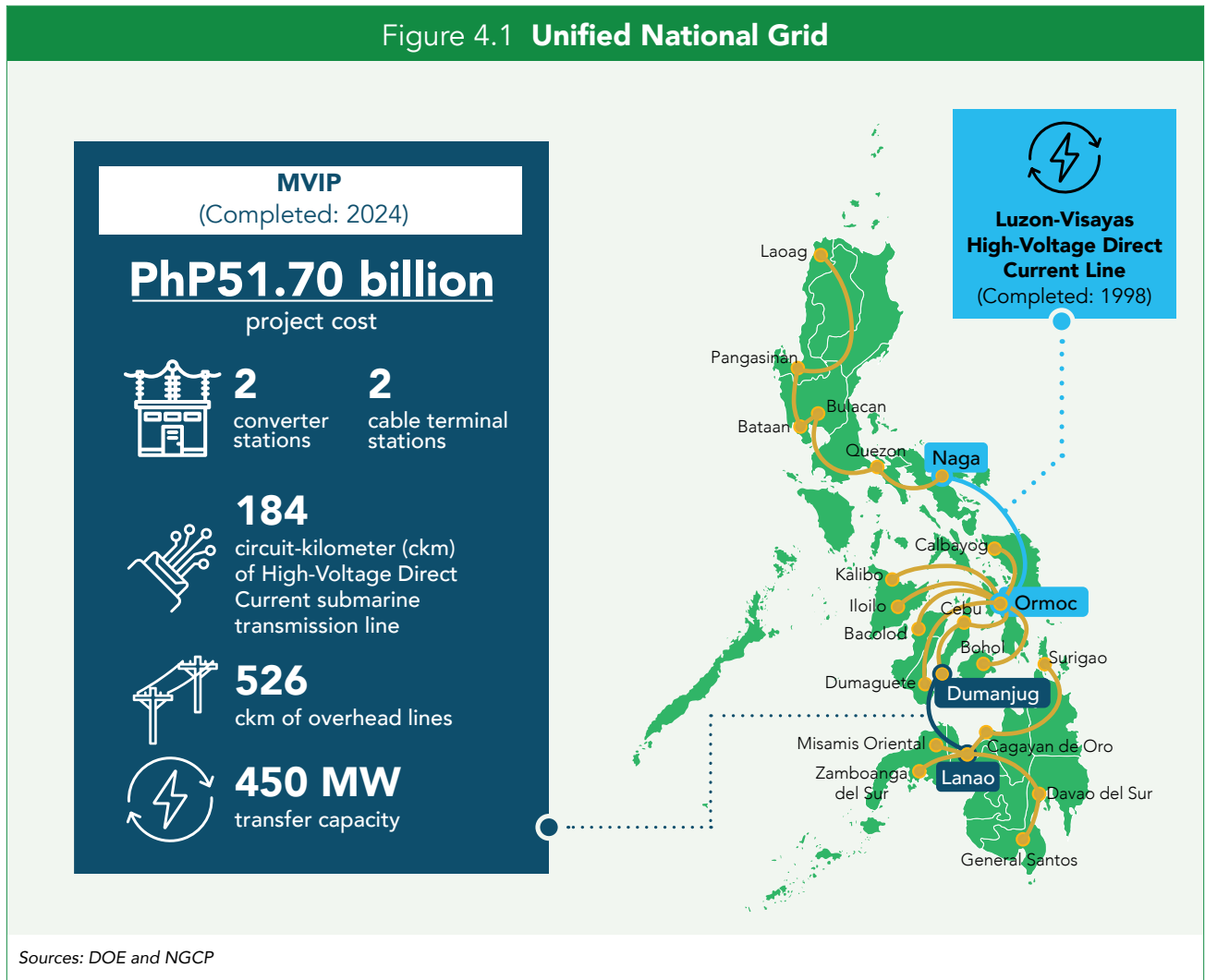
On January 26, 2024, we officially energized the 450-megawatt (MW) Mindanao-Visayas Interconnection Project (MVIP) at its full capacity. Having a single and unified grid that connects the three major power grids of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao has been a decades-long aspiration of the country (see Figure 4.1).

The project was first conceptualized in the early 1980s<sup>166</sup> and was finally realized under this Administration. The MVIP allowed the sharing of energy resources, such as natural gas in Luzon, geothermal in Visayas, and hydropower in Mindanao.

It also enabled the utilization of stranded power from various parts of the country.

**Improved the transmission network in the Visayas.**

Due to insufficient transmission facilities, the Panay Island experienced a total blackout for three days at the start of 2024. Meanwhile, parts of Negros Occidental were under rotational power brownouts. These incidents caused serious economic setback in the region. These also underscored the crucial role of interconnection projects in delivering power where it is needed and mitigating the impact of power disturbances during unforeseen events.

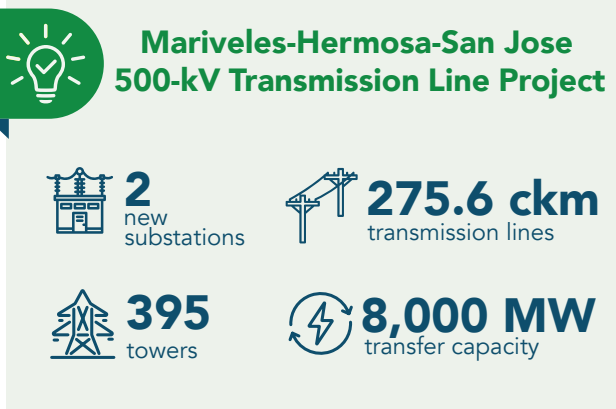


166 Through a study conducted by JICA.

On March 27, 2024, the CNP 230-kV Backbone Project was completed. This involved the construction of a high-voltage transmission line and associated substations to connect the islands of Cebu, Negros, and Panay (see Figure 4.2).

**Expanded the transmission capacity in Luzon.** On June 23, 2024, the Mariveles-Hermosa-San Jose 500-kV Transmission Line Project was completed and fully energized. It enables the transfer of capacity from power generation projects in Bataan and Zambales to the load centers in Manila and other vicinities.

Figure 4.2 CNP Project Details



**Increased Energy Capacities<sup>167</sup>**

In my previous SONA, I emphasized the need to increase our energy capacities. We were able to attract more investments in the energy sector through the streamlining of the application process for power projects and conduct of investment fora and energy auctions, among others.

From July 2022 to April 2024, our installed<sup>168</sup> and dependable<sup>169</sup> capacities increased by 1,503.93 MW and 1,978.22 MW, respectively (see Table 4.1). These factored in the uprating, derating, decommissioning, and mothballing of some generation facilities, including the resumption of the 1,200-MW Ilijan Power Plant in June 2023 and the commercial operation of 24 generation facilities.

The CNP Project will support the entry of RE sources from Negros, address the growing power demand of Cebu, and improve the reliability of the grid in Panay Island.

167 DOE, June 25, 2024.

168 The full-load continuous gross capacity of a unit under specified conditions, as calculated from the electric generator nameplate based on the rated power factor.

169 The maximum capacity when modified for ambient limitations for a specified period of time, such as a month or a season.

**Table 4.1 Installed and Dependable Capacities (in MW)**

Capacity	As of July 2022	As of July 2023	As of April 2024	Increase (from July 2022 to April 2024)
Installed Capacity	27,120.64	28,300.10	28,624.56	1,503.93 (5.55%)
Dependable Capacity	22,946.47	24,713.59	24,924.69	1,978.22 (8.62%)

Note: Figures may not add up due to rounding.

Source: DOE

The need to ensure contingencies, especially in emergencies, cannot be overemphasized. In April and May 2024, the country experienced thin energy supply, especially in Luzon and the Visayas. This was caused by high peak demand triggered by extreme temperatures brought by El Niño, compounded by the forced outages or decreased outputs of some power plants.

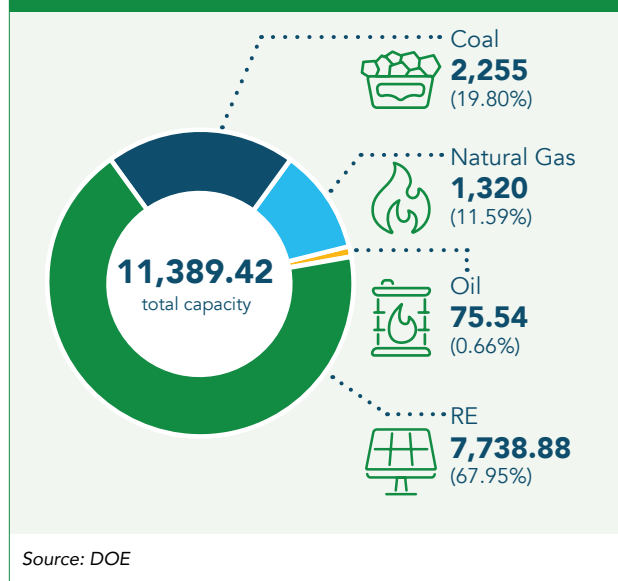
We are expecting to build 139 power plants initiated by the private sector, with total committed capacity of 11,389.42 MW by 2028. Around 68% of the committed capacities are RE (see Figure 4.3). We are expecting 58 power plants to go online with a total committed capacity of 3,806.52 MW from May to December 2024.

### Continued Efforts to Diversify the Energy Mix<sup>170</sup>

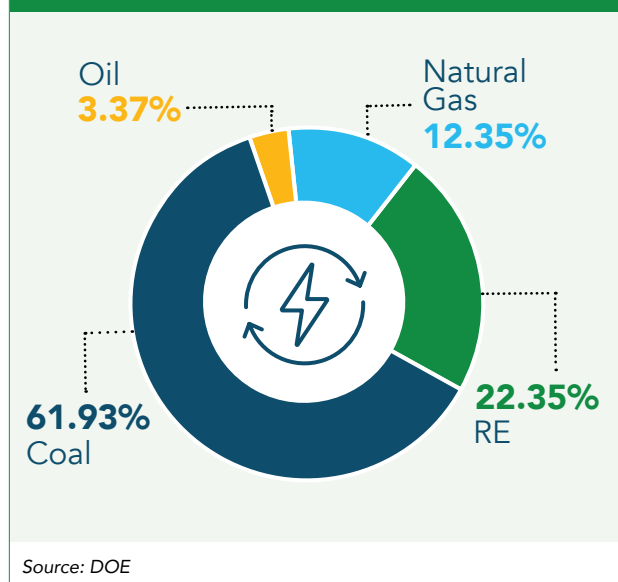
We are diversifying our energy mix toward sustainability and affordability, and accelerating the country’s transition to a clean energy future.

**Promoted RE sources.** In 2023, coal continued to dominate the country’s power generation mix accounting for 61.93%, while RE only had a share of 22.35% (see Figure 4.4).

**Figure 4.3 Committed Capacities by 2028 (in MW)**



**Figure 4.4 Philippine Power Generation Mix (2023)**



170 DOE, June 25, 2024; and DTI, June 26, 2024.

Our country has high RE potential that needs to be developed. In the BloombergNEF<sup>171</sup> Climate 2023 Report, the Philippines ranked fourth among the most attractive developing economies for clean energy investments after India, China, and Chile. Our ranking moved up six places compared to 2022, which indicates our progress in transitioning to RE.

From July 2022 to April 2024, 19 RE projects were completed (see Table 4.2). We are also implementing measures to aggressively increase RE investments in the country and achieve our target RE share of at least 32% by 2028 (see Figure 4.5).

Table 4.2 **New RE Projects in Commercial Operation**  
(July 2022 to April 2024)

Resource	No. of Projects	Capacity (in MW)
Solar	10	389.83
Hydropower	7	73.79
Biomass	2	15.90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>479.51</b>

*Note: Figures may not add up due to rounding.*  
*Source: DOE*

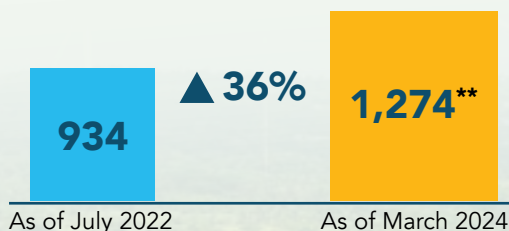
Figure 4.5 **Increased RE Investments in the Country**



Share of RE investments in the **PhP2.73-trillion** DTI-approved investments (July 2022 to May 2024)

Source	No. of RE Projects	Amount (in PhP billion)
Solar	112	430.98
Wind	16	949.26
Hydropower	16	321.42
Biomass	4	7.40
Geothermal	2	8.26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>1,717.32</b>

### Number of Active RE Contracts



**400** newly awarded contracts with potential capacity of **62,181.48 MW** (July 2022 to March 2024)

Allowing full foreign ownership in RE projects resulted in the awarding of

**22** Wind Energy Service Contracts to wholly-owned foreign companies with potential capacity of

**6,399.90 MW** (November 2022 to May 2024)

\*Figures may not add up due to rounding.

\*\*Factored in the newly awarded contracts and those that were terminated, relinquished, surrendered, or reinstated

Photo Credit and Sources: PCO, DOE, and DTI

171 BloombergNEF is Bloomberg's primary research service that covers clean energy, advanced transport, digital industry, innovative materials, and commodities.

On February 22, 2024, the DENR and DOE signed a MOA granting the latter access to offshore wind (OSW) areas<sup>172</sup> for the conduct of pre-development and exploration activities. This is a testament to our commitment to provide RE alternatives, while ensuring compliance with environmental standards.

As of May 2024, the DOE awarded 91 OSW contracts with 65 gigawatts (GW) potential capacity. More than half of these or 52 contracts, with a total capacity of 29,825 MW, were awarded during this Administration.

**Explored new and emerging energy technologies.** We are also exploring new and emerging energy technologies such as nuclear and hydrogen.

On November 16, 2023, the Governments of the Republic of the Philippines and the United States (US) signed the Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy or the 123 Agreement.



The President and US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink witness the signing of the 123 Agreement by DOE Secretary Lotilla and US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken in San Francisco, California on November 16, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

The 123 Agreement lays the legal framework for potential nuclear power projects with US providers. This will allow the transfer of information, nuclear material, equipment, and components directly between the Philippines and the US or through authorized persons to engage in transfer activities.

The agreement will likewise pave the way for streamlining the licensing requirements for the private sector with respect to investments on nuclear-related intangible transfers of technology.

On January 12, 2024, the DOE issued a national policy framework and roadmap for hydrogen development, production, and utilization. The guidelines on the awarding of Service Contracts on the exploration, development, and production of native hydrogen was likewise issued.

Subsequently, two Pre-Determined Areas for native hydrogen exploration adjacent to the northern portion of the Zambales Ophiolite Complex and the western portion of Central Luzon were offered for the Philippine Bid Round held on February 26, 2024.<sup>173</sup>

**Decommissioned coal-fired power plants (CFPPs).** A key aspect of energy transition involves the voluntary early decommissioning or repurposing of existing CFPPs.

The Philippines, through the ACEN Corporation, has pioneered the world's first market-based energy transition mechanism for the early retirement of the 246-MW South Luzon Thermal Energy Corporation CFPP.

172 Covered by OSW Energy Service Contracts.

173 The deadline for submission of bids is on August 27, 2024.

The Asian Development Bank is also piloting its Energy Transition Mechanism, focusing on the early retirement of the government-owned 210-MW Mindanao CFPP.

To further push this agenda should transition financing become available, the DOE will formulate the criteria and policy for the mandatory retirement of CFPPs.

### Pursued Full Household Electrification<sup>174</sup>

The goal of providing electricity to all Filipinos across the archipelago has been elusive to many Administrations. To realize this, we are exploring all possible strategies. As of December 2023, the country's household (HH) electrification stood at 92.74% (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 HH Electrification in the Philippines	
<b>HH Electrification Level</b> (as of December 2023)	<b>92.74%</b>
Total HH Served (as of December 2023)	25.71 million
Additional HH Energized (July 2022 to December 2023)	440,550
Remaining HH to be Served (2024 to 2028)	3.77 million
<small>Note: The HH electrification level and total HH served were based on the 2020 Philippine Census of Population. Source: DOE</small>	

Pursuant to RA No. 11646,<sup>175</sup> on May 24, 2024, the National Power Corporation (NPC) and Maharlika Consortium<sup>176</sup> signed a microgrid service contract for the latter to develop microgrid systems for nine unserved areas and

one underserved area in the provinces of Cebu, Quezon, and Palawan not later than November 2025. This initiative is expected to benefit 4,487 HH or 18,400 Filipinos.

In addition, the NPC is implementing the Accelerated Hybridization Program for the establishment of RE sources in areas not connected to the main grid to ensure continued power service delivery. In 2023, three RE solar photovoltaic diesel hybrid system projects were completed in Bohol, Catanduanes, and Isabela. By 2028, the NPC is targeting 102 power plants to be hybridized with RE technology.

### Promoted the Welfare of Electricity Consumers<sup>177</sup>

Electricity, just like water, is a necessity. Recognizing this, we are ensuring that consumer interests are protected.

**Ensured fair and affordable electricity prices.** The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) undertook measures to ensure affordable rates (see Figure 4.6).

The ERC is also targeting to complete their transmission rate reset review<sup>178</sup> for the Fourth and Fifth Regulatory Periods covering the periods 2016 to 2022 and 2023 to 2027, respectively, within 2024. This is expected to lower the transmission rates as the NGCP may only charge consumers the reasonable rates determined by the ERC. The last completed transmission rate reset was in 2010.

174 DOE, June 25, 2024.

175 Titled, "Microgrid Systems Act."

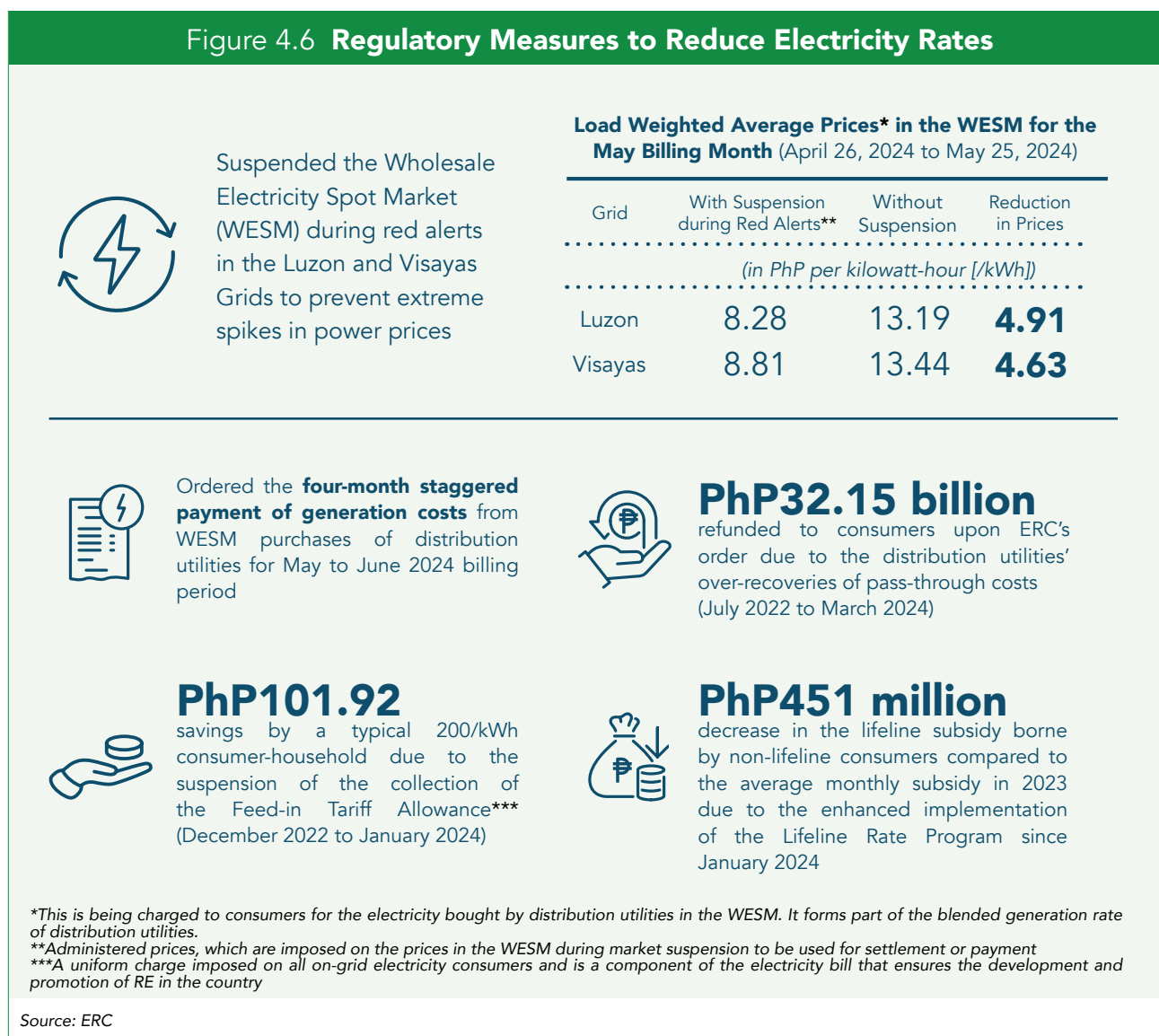
176 Composed of Maharlika Clean Power Holdings Corporation, CleanGrid Partners Pte. Ltd., and WEnergy Global Pte. Ltd.

177 DOE, June 25, 2024; and ERC, June 25, 2024.

178 It involves a thorough evaluation of the transmission utility's projected and actual expenses, capital and equity, service efficiency, operational costs, and a reasonable rate of return.



Figure 4.6 Regulatory Measures to Reduce Electricity Rates



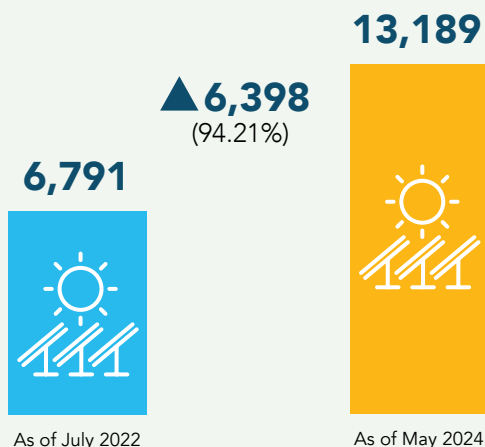
**Strengthened electricity consumer choices.** Following the commercial operation of the WESM in Mindanao in 2023, the DOE declared the commercial operation of the Retail Competition and Open Access (RCOA)<sup>179</sup> and Green Energy Option Program<sup>180</sup> in Mindanao on March 26, 2024.<sup>181</sup> This paved the way for a more dynamic and diverse energy market in the region, where consumers have the freedom to choose their preferred electricity supplier.

Meanwhile, the Net-Metering Program enables consumers who generate their own RE to offset their consumption and earn credits for surplus electricity.

Under this Administration, the number of net-metering customers almost doubled from 6,791 end-users as of July 2022 to 13,189 as of May 31, 2024 (see Figure 4.7).

179 It allows contestable customers to decide which electricity suppliers to source power from. Under current rules, contestable customers consuming at least 500 kW a month may choose their own power suppliers.  
 180 It provides end-users with a demand of 100 kW and above to source their electricity supply from RE suppliers.  
 181 As of May 31, 2024, no RCOA registration in Mindanao has been recorded yet.

**Figure 4.7 Number of Net-Metering Customers**



Source: ERC

**Mitigated the Impact of High Fuel Prices<sup>182</sup>**

In 2024, global oil prices rose primarily due to political instability in major oil-producing regions. As domestic oil prices are predominantly influenced by the international market (see Figure 4.8), we are pursuing measures to mitigate high and volatile fuel prices.

**Box 4.1 Intensified Promotion of Energy Conservation and Efficiency**

With the government setting a strong example, I issued AO No. 15\* on January 16, 2024, which directs the accelerated implementation of the Government Energy Management Program (GEMP). As a result, the government's electricity savings from the first quarter of 2023 to the first quarter of 2024 increased by 28.32%.

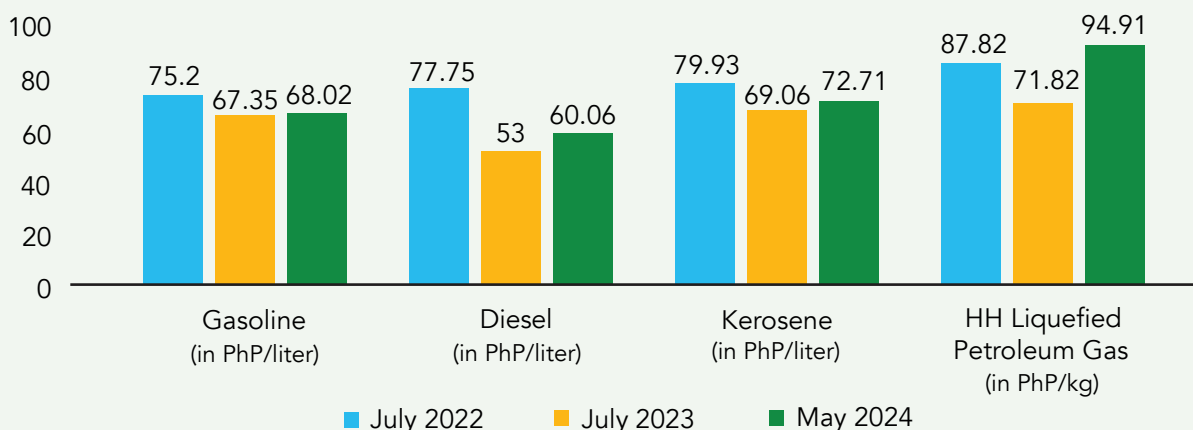
	Q1 2023	Q1 2024	Increase (%)
Electricity Savings	23.82 GW per hour	30.56 GW per hour	28.32
Cost Equivalent	PhP272.22 million	PhP364.92 million	34.05

*Note: Figures may not add up due to rounding.*

\*Titled, "Directing the Accelerated Implementation of the GEMP."

Source: DOE

**Figure 4.8 Domestic Fuel Prices (monthly average)**



Source: DOE

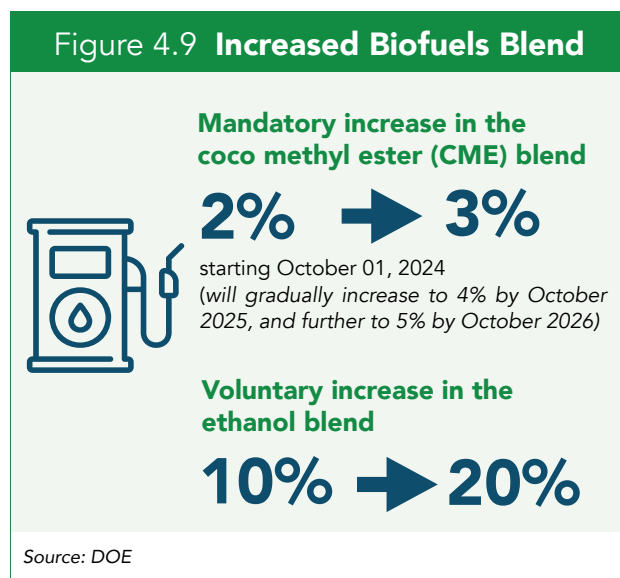
182 DOE, June 25, 2024; and DOTr, June 24, 2024.

**Provided fuel subsidies to the vulnerable sector.** We are implementing the Fuel Subsidy Project to ensure the financial viability of public utility vehicle (PUV) operations while eliminating potential fare increases that would burden commuters.

Under the FY 2023 GAA, the project was provided an appropriation amounting to PhP3 billion. From September 07, 2023 to May 31, 2024, 563,151 beneficiaries were provided PhP1.84-billion worth of fuel subsidies. This project also has a PhP2.5-billion appropriation under the FY 2024 GAA. The distribution is targeted to commence in July 2024.

### **Increased the biodiesel blend.**

On May 20, 2024, the DOE released the guidelines for adopting a higher biofuels blend (see Figure 4.9).



There is an observed mileage savings on the use of higher CME blend<sup>183</sup> at around PhP4.17 per liter. This will compensate the estimated increase of PhP0.09 per liter in the diesel pump price with the increase of the CME blend.

Downstream oil industry participants also have the option to raise the ethanol blend in all gasoline fuel. This could bring about an estimated decrease of PhP3.21 per liter in the gasoline pump price.

The current ethanol blend for gasoline has been at 10% since 2012. Meanwhile, the CME blend increased to 2% in 2007.

### **Pursued the development of the electric vehicle (EV) industry.**

As a long-term measure, we are developing the EV industry to reduce our dependence on imported fuels. Some of our existing schemes to encourage the adoption of EVs include:

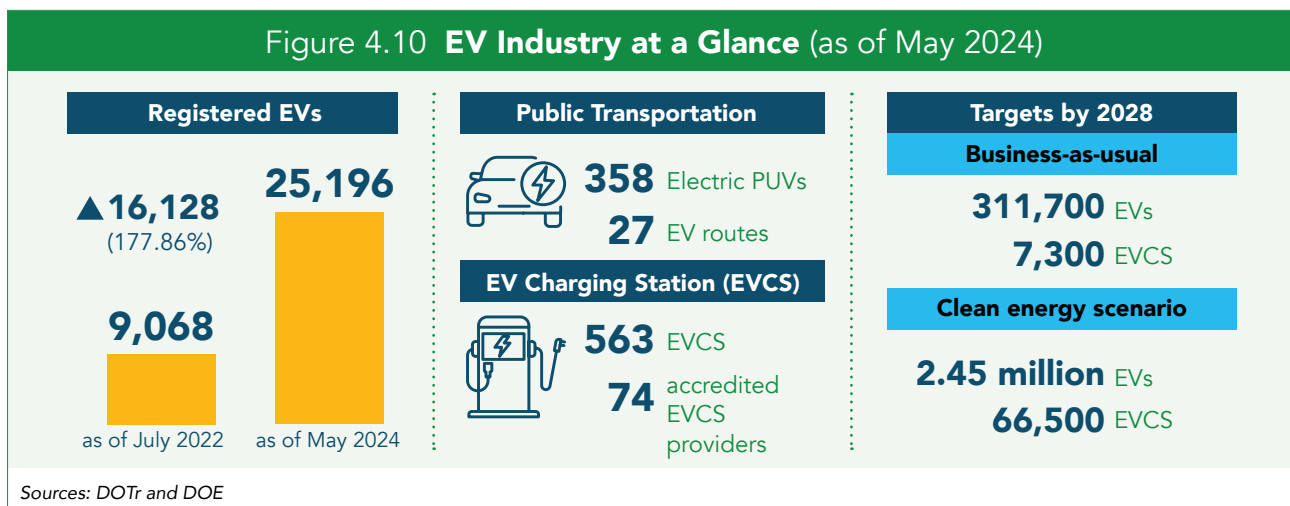
- Tariff suspension for battery EVs (BEVs) until 2028, including two- and three-wheeled BEVs, hybrid EVs (HEVs), and plug-in HEVs;
- Zero percent excise tax for BEVs while 50% excise tax reduction for HEVs under RA No. 10963;<sup>184</sup>
- Motor vehicle's users charge discount of 30% for BEVs and 15% for HEVs;
- Exemption from vehicle volume reduction schemes;
- Priority registration and franchise processing with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board; and
- Availability of loan facilities for EVs (e.g., Special Package for Environment-Friendly and Efficiently-Driven PUV from the Land Bank of the Philippines [LBP]).

As the EV industry grows, the government is implementing measures to achieve its targets by 2028 (see Figure 4.10).

183 Based on the on-road test using higher CME blend from 2% to 5%, an increase of around 10% mileage was observed.

184 Titled, "Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion."

Figure 4.10 **EV Industry at a Glance** (as of May 2024)



## Safeguarding the Integrity of the Environment



Dahican Beach, with its white sand, is located in Mati, Davao Oriental.

Photo Credit: DOT

### Rehabilitated and Protected the Country's Ecosystems<sup>185</sup>

Environmental protection, conservation, restoration, and regeneration are critical to achieving climate-resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development. This Administration is committed to ensure that the inextricable links between climate and ecosystems are bolstered to attain our adaptation and mitigation goals and enhance resilience.

**Rehabilitated forestlands.** We continue to implement programs to protect and rehabilitate our forestlands, including the National Greening Program (NGP). Since the start of this Administration up to March 2024, we established 60,338 ha of new plantations, with 40,668,554 seedlings planted such as timber, fuelwood, cacao, coffee, bamboo, fruit trees, and indigenous species.

185 DENR, June 29, 2024.

We also maintained and protected 162,191 ha of existing plantations and protected 8.5 million ha of forestlands against forest fires, poaching, pests, and diseases. For the first quarter of 2024, we hired 1,085 forest protection officers and 491 forest guards.

We also vigorously pursued the implementation of the Anti-illegal Logging Program. We reduced the illegal logging hotspot<sup>186</sup> municipalities by 37.50% or from 16 hotspots in 2022 to 10 hotspots in 2023.

The municipalities removed from the illegal logging hotspot list in 2023 include Jones, Isabela; Bag-gao, Cagayan; Boston and Cateel, Davao Oriental; Laak, Davao de Oro; and Trento, Agusan del Sur.

Further, in 2023, we apprehended 2.46 million board feet of illegal forest products and filed 411 cases against violators.

### Protected biodiversity resources

**Managed protected areas.** This Administration remains steadfast in its commitment to the diligent and continued responsible management of roughly 4.65 million ha of land area and 3.14 million ha of sea area within the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS). This includes the 248 nationally managed protected areas in the Philippines.

On May 13, 2024, the DENR led the historic designation of the Pasonanca Natural Park as the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Heritage Park, the 11<sup>th</sup> in the Philippines, and the first in the Zamboanga Peninsula.

The Pasonanca Natural Park, with a sprawling area of 17,414 ha, houses a diverse range of flora and fauna, including rare species like the Mindanao bleeding-heart and the critically endangered Philippine eagle.



The Pasonanca Natural Park was designated as the 52<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Heritage Park on May 13, 2024.

Photo Credit: DENR

**Intensified coastal and marine environment management.** We are establishing the first six marine scientific research stations in the country's major marine biogeographic regions. These aim to increase domain awareness and deepen understanding of our coastal and marine environments and their uniquely rich marine biodiversity and natural resources. The stations are in Pag-asa Island, Palawan; Santa Ana, Cagayan; and the provinces of Aurora, Samar, Sarangani, and Zamboanga del Sur.

Meanwhile, on May 07, 2024, we embarked on a landmark partnership with major business conglomerates for the protection and conservation of the Verde Island Passage (VIP).<sup>187</sup>

<sup>186</sup> The parameters for identifying illegal logging hotspots include the high incidence of illegal logging in the area.

<sup>187</sup> The DENR and DOE, together with the Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Metro Pacific Investments Corporation, and San Miguel Corporation, agreed to assume joint stewardship of the VIP.

This critical waterway between Luzon and Mindoro Islands is regarded as the “center of the center” of the world’s marine shore fish diversity. It covers the provinces of Batangas, Marinduque, Romblon, and Oriental and Occidental Mindoro.

Mangroves are vital in coastal protection, flood prevention, biodiversity conservation, carbon capture, and food security. However, they continue to face a decline and are continually threatened due to human activities, extreme weather events, and the consequences of climate change.

In partnership with the Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA), the DENR completed the first national mangrove mapping project by applying space-based technology, artificial intelligence, and citizen science. This allows the opportunity to explore and intensify our protection of communities fronting the ocean against extreme weather, preserve the lifecycles from ridge to reef, and increase opportunities for food security and our transformation into a blue economy.

**Protected wildlife and threatened species.** The Philippines is one of the most megadiverse countries in the world with 50% of its 52,000 species classified as endemic or found nowhere else in the world. Over 2,000 species of flora and fauna are classified as critically endangered, threatened, and vulnerable.

With a PhP100-million budget, the DENR is implementing interventions to protect five critically endangered species: the Philippine eagle, *tamaraw*, *dugong*, Palawan cockatoo, and marine turtles. It is also monitoring and protecting 356 roosting, nesting, and survey sites of these priority threatened species.



The DENR prioritizes the protection and conservation of the critically endangered Philippine eagle.

Photo Credit: DOT

The DENR, in partnership with the Philippine Eagle Foundation, academe, private sector, and international partners, supported the first translocation of a pair of endemic and critically endangered Philippine eagles from Mindanao to Leyte province. This effort is part of a long-term conservation and breeding program to remove the Philippine eagle from the global Red List and repopulate the historical Philippine eagle corridor from Luzon to the Visayas and Mindanao.

Further, 11 critical habitats for threatened wildlife across the country have been declared, aside from the 13 protected areas established under the NIPAS as wildlife sanctuaries.

We also mobilized international financing amounting to PhP107 million to support the implementation of 22 projects on biodiversity, over and above financing for climate action and coastal and marine management.

## Improved Environmental Quality and Monitoring<sup>188</sup>

Ensuring that the country's environmental quality meets established standards remains my top priority. Thus, we continue to strengthen efforts to protect our environment and our people from the dangers of pollution and destructive human activities.

### **Improved air quality monitoring.**

This Administration directed its efforts toward improving air quality monitoring. We partnered with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on the Airborne and Satellite Investigation of Asian Air Quality Project.

In February 2024, five of our engineers and air quality specialists joined NASA scientists on board scientific research flights specifically designed to study the atmosphere of Metro Manila and its surrounding regions.

These flights built their technical capacity and expertise on air quality monitoring, which will result in accurate and comprehensive assessment of air pollution. It will also help the local governments in implementing interventions to address air pollution hotspots, strengthen air quality regulations, implement effective emission control measures, and develop sustainable strategies in air quality monitoring.

In addition, we continue to implement the Pan-Asia Partnership for Geospatial Air Pollution Information and the Pandora Asia Network Philippines Project, in cooperation with the Korea International Cooperation Agency and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

Four ground-based remote sensing instruments for data validation called "Pandora" will be installed in the country to be part of the Pandora Asia Network.

**Managed solid waste.** With strong economic growth and increased consumer demand, the Philippines generates an enormous amount of plastic waste that puts ecosystems and development at risk. We are determined to address this problem under this Administration.

In 2023, we issued the IRR of RA No. 11898.<sup>189</sup> Our aim is to achieve an 80% plastic waste recovery by 2028. The implementation of the EPR Act shall promote sustainable consumption and production and is a step forward toward a circular economy.



We need the collective effort of everyone to effectively address our solid waste problem. On January 06, 2024, the DILG launched the *Kalinga at Inisyatiba para sa Malinis na Bayan* (KALINISAN) sa Bagong Pilipinas Program. As of May 31, 2024, 40.47 million kg of waste were collected from 22,805 barangays. The weekly cleanup drive had gathered 628,755 participants from 709,125 sites.

188 DENR, June 29, 2024; PhilSA, June 24, 2024; and DILG, June 24, 2024.

189 Titled, "Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act of 2022."

On April 22, 2024, the DENR also launched the *PLASTIKalikan*, a clean-up program that serves as a long-term plan for the mining industry to minimize the generation of plastic waste in mining sites and neighboring communities. Since the launch, we collected 47,000 kg of plastic and other solid waste across several mining sites and neighboring communities.

Meanwhile, on March 11, 2024, we officially launched the Green Economy Programme for the Philippines (GEPP), in partnership with the European Union (EU). At its core is our collective commitment to promote circular economy practices and waste prevention initiatives. It will run from 2023 to 2028 with a budget of EUR60 million (PhP3.65 billion).



#### GEPP Goals in the Next Five Years (2023 to 2028)

- ✓ 30 LGUs introduced separate collection systems for plastic waste recycling
- ✓ 2,500 new green jobs linked to the circular economy model
- ✓ 6,000 MSMEs applied circular supply chain management
- ✓ 25,000 tons of plastic recycled

We are working with the World Bank on municipal solid waste plans, recycling systems, plastic circularity opportunities, and strategies to combat the plastic waste crisis. We also joined the Global Plastic Action Partnership to strengthen our commitment against plastic pollution.

**Promoted sustainable and responsible mining.** We recognize that revenues from the country's mineral resources contribute significantly to the economy. On April 23, 2024, the government received and remitted to the Bureau of the Treasury the first Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA)<sup>190</sup> revenue amounting to PhP1.13 billion, representing the additional government share of minerals produced by OGPI, the operator of Didipio Mine in Northern Luzon.

While mining can significantly boost the economy, we are ensuring that mining activities do not compromise the integrity of our environment.

The DENR established an integrated database, which would allow a systematic approach in identifying potential mineralized areas for possible government-led exploration.

Meanwhile, on May 22, 2024, I signed into law RA No. 11995,<sup>191</sup> which aims to measure the country's natural resources, including minerals, and stop unchecked development and resource exploitation.

Recognizing their vital role in the industry, the DENR is also undertaking a series of initiatives to formalize small-scale mining operations, with the end in view of modernizing standards and improving the protection of small-scale miners. These include reviewing laws that cover small-scale mining.

190 Under the FTAA with the Oceana Gold Philippines Inc. (OGPI) renewed on July 14, 2021, the Philippine Government and the mining firm agreed to a 60%-40% sharing deal.

191 Titled, "Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System Act."



### Utilized Satellite Data<sup>192</sup>

We continue to maximize the use of satellite data to monitor the environment. In 2023, the DENR developed the National Natural Resource Geospatial Database to catalog all our natural resources using satellite images and drones and survey natural and man-made changes within our islands.

As of December 2023, we uploaded over 1,500 maps, including NGP plantations, forest cover, river basins, and mangrove areas. Through these, we have identified and mapped one million ha out of the two million ha for reforestation as suitable Potential Investment Areas.

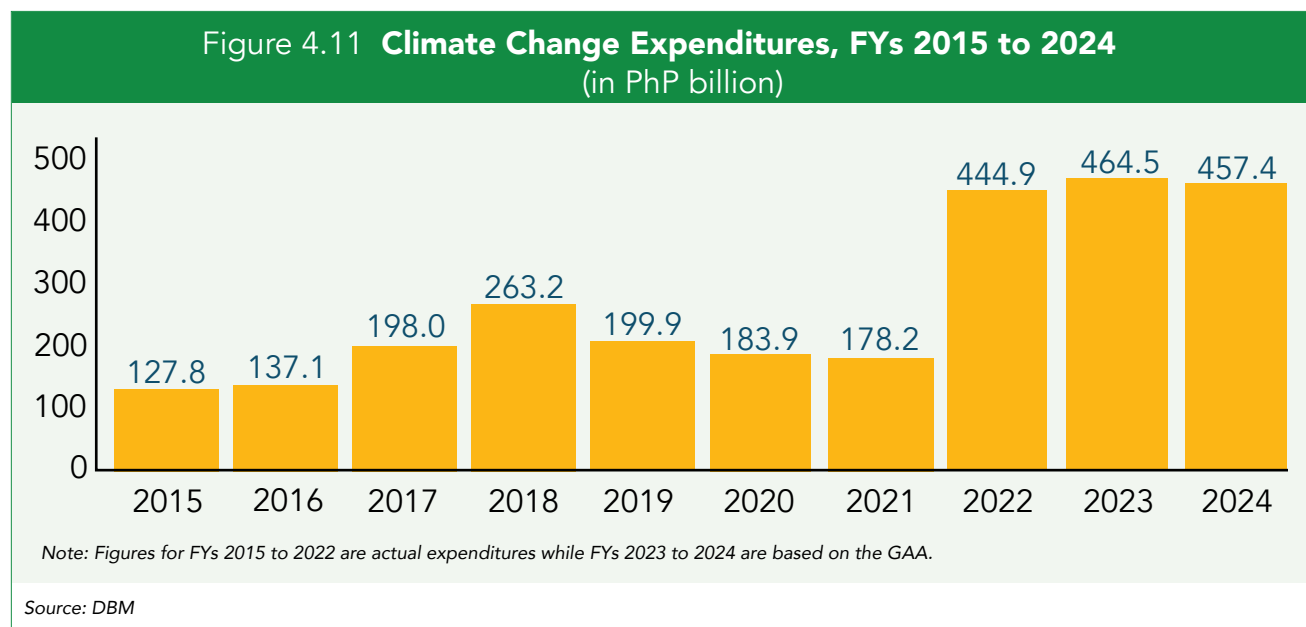
Meanwhile, the PhilSA generated and distributed 51,037 maps, satellite images, and other space-borne data to national and local government agencies, the academe, and private sector from July 2022 to March 2024.

### Advocated for Ambitious Climate Action<sup>193</sup>

We continue to witness the devastating effects of climate change in terms of destructive typhoons, rising sea level, longer-lasting droughts, flooding, and degradation of our ecosystems. We, therefore, participated in important international climate change negotiations to amplify the voice of the Philippines on the global stage.

We also actively mobilized climate finance and investments. We are committed to highlighting the urgency of the situation faced by developing countries like ours, ensuring that we will have the support, resources, and technology we need to undertake critical courses of action.

**Mobilized climate finance and investments.** We have been focused on increasing our climate change expenditures (see Figure 4.11).



192 DENR, June 29, 2024; and PhilSA, June 24, 2024.

193 DENR, June 29, 2024; DBM, June 26, 2024 and July 05, 2024; DOF, June 28, 2024; Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), June 25, 2024 and July 09, 2024; and Climate Change Commission (CCC), May 29, 2024 and June 27, 2024.

We increased our climate change expenditures by 149.66% or from PhP178.2 billion in 2021 to PhP444.9 billion in 2022. For 2024, we allocated PhP457.4 billion for climate change-related programs, activities, and projects.

Based on the 2024 GAA, the DPWH had the highest budget on climate change amounting to PhP375.01 billion, mainly for flood control structures. This is followed by the DA with PhP29.27 billion for food security programs, and the DENR with PhP10.63 billion for ecosystems and environmental stability programs.

Meanwhile, under the People's Survival Fund (PSF), we approved seven new climate change adaptation projects of LGUs from 2023 to 2024, with funding requirements of PhP971.41 million (see *Table 4.4*).

This brought the total approved PSF projects to 13. This is the first time, in a remarkably short period, that the PSF Board approved projects of such magnitude.

This signifies the seriousness of this Administration in prioritizing climate change adaptation and mitigation, making the Philippines a trailblazer in domestic climate financing.

To complement our efforts to fund climate action, we are actively engaging our international partners to access climate financing. We mobilized an estimated USD590.92 million or PhP34.13 billion to support the implementation of 54 projects and commitments, covering forestry, land management, biodiversity, environment, and climate change.

**Table 4.4 Approved PSF Projects (2023 to 2024)**

LGU	Approved Funding (in PhP million)	Year Approved	Project
Ilocos Norte	305.29	2024	Ilocos Norte Climate-Resilient Intervention toward Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
Cortes, Surigao del Sur	126.69	2024	Building Resilience with Ridge to Reef Adaptation to Climate Change
Mountain Province	271.15	2023	Mountain Province Climate Field School for Farmers
Maramag, Bukidnon	126.40	2023	Enhancing the Climate Adaptive Capacity of Communities through Establishing a Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Approach in the River Ecosystem of Maramag, Bukidnon
Borongan City, Eastern Samar	117.96	2023	Reinforcement of Lo-om River Flood Protection System and Redevelopment for Resilient Communities and Livelihoods
Cabagan, Isabela	21.28	2023	Construction of three units of solar-powered pumps in different barangays
Catanauan, Quezon	2.64	2023	Mangrove Rehabilitation Project

Source: DOF

Apart from this, we have mobilized other climate financing from international partners to fund various climate-related initiatives, including the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and the country's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

### **Formulated climate change action plans.**

We formulated key plans to help us fulfill our climate commitments and support our advocacy for climate action.

In May 2024, we completed and submitted the Philippines' first NAP, making us the third ASEAN Member State and 56<sup>th</sup> country globally to submit a NAP. We also formulated the first Implementation Plan of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCIP), supporting the Philippines' NDC commitment of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction and avoidance of 75%<sup>194</sup> from 2020 to 2030.

To track our progress toward low-carbon and sustainable development, we completed the 2015 and 2020 National GHG Inventories, with computed net emissions from key sectors, including agriculture, waste, energy, transport, and forestry.

### **Promoted the Philippines' position in international climate conferences.**

In September 2023, the Philippines signed the historic agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction or the High Seas Treaty.

This aims to establish a legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas of the ocean that lie beyond the jurisdiction of any one nation.

In November and December 2023, during the COP28<sup>195</sup> in Dubai, we communicated the Philippines' support to key COP28 Declarations such as the COP28 United Arab Emirates Declaration on Climate Finance; Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action; Climate and Health; and Coalition for High Ambition Partnership for Climate Action.

During the COP28, the country also played a key role in operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF)<sup>196</sup> and the Santiago Network.<sup>197</sup>



Philippine officials lead the opening of the Philippine Pavilion during the COP28 in Dubai on December 01, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

194 Unconditional reduction of 2.71% and conditional reduction of 72.29%, which is contingent on external support.

195 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

196 Aims to provide financial assistance to countries vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

197 Connects vulnerable developing nations with the technical assistance and resources to comprehensively address climate risks.



*Hosting the LDF Board reinforces our dedication to inclusivity and our leadership role in ensuring that the voices of those most affected by climate change shape the future of international climate policies.”*

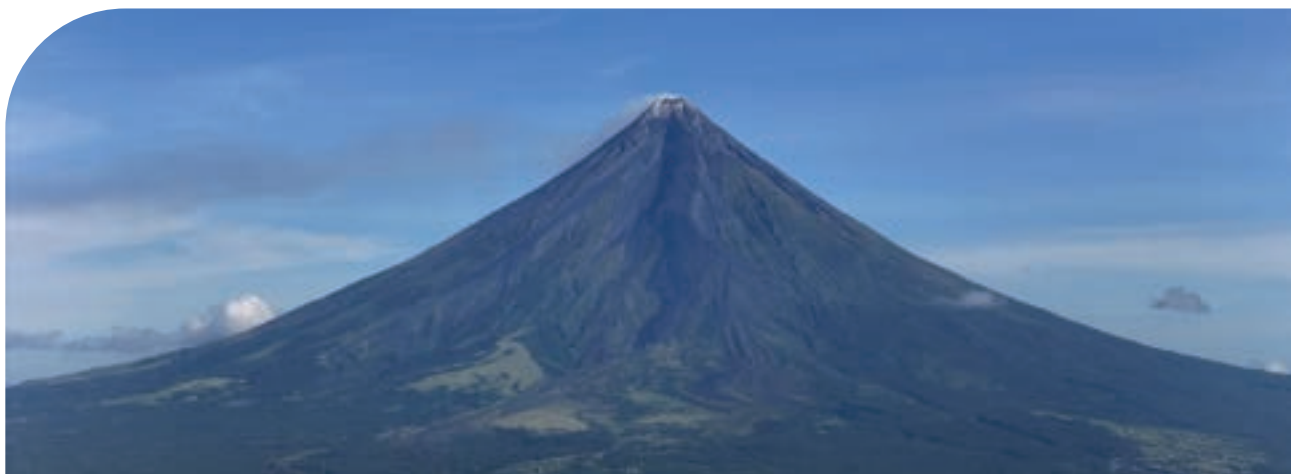
President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
July 09, 2024

We formally offered and advocated for the Philippines to be the deserving host of the Board of the LDF. As a country that has experienced the devastating effects of climate change, the Philippines would be in the best position to help guide the Board in its decisions.

The Philippines secured a seat in the LDF Board as a permanent member of the Asia Pacific Group for 2024 and 2026, and an alternate member for 2025.

During the second meeting of the LDF Board held in Songdo, Korea on July 09, 2024, the Philippines was selected to host the Board.

## Strengthening Climate and Disaster Resilience



Mt. Mayon is the most active volcano in the Philippines and is known for its perfect cone shape.

Photo Credit: DOT

In 2023, we plotted 16,634 earthquakes and monitored 11 tropical cyclones and two volcanic eruptions. We also experienced the adverse impacts of El Niño, which affected critical sectors such as water, food, and energy. Despite diligent efforts to prepare for and mitigate the effects of

these natural disasters, we still incurred PhP67.18 billion worth of damage and losses from July 2022 to May 2024. These strengthened our resolve to further boost the country's disaster resiliency and build safer, adaptive, and disaster-resilient communities.<sup>198</sup>

198 DOST, June 24, 2024; and Office of Civil Defense (OCD), June 28, 2024.

## Bolstered the Country's DRRM

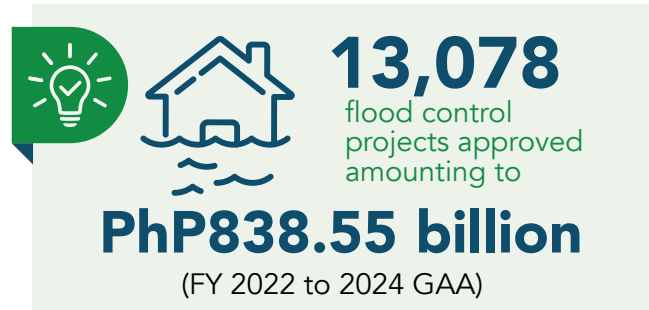
This Administration sustained the implementation of DRRM initiatives to bolster the DRRM capacity of government agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders. We aim to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized groups and improve their resilience against disasters.

**Established disaster-resilient infrastructure.**<sup>199</sup> The availability of evacuation centers has been a recurring problem of LGUs in times of disaster. Many displaced families stay in alternative facilities that are not suited for the purpose such as schools and gymnasiums. This only creates additional problems such as disruption in children's education.

We are, thus, ensuring that each city or municipality will have an evacuation center that is safe, adaptive, and climate-proof. Permanent evacuation centers that are fit for this purpose and can withstand disasters are key to preventing the loss of lives and injury and are critical in jumpstarting the recovery of communities.



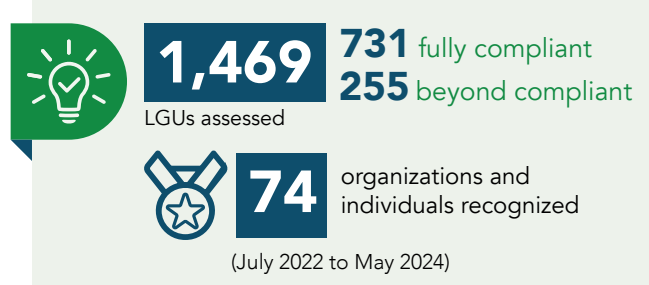
We also continue to build flood control projects to improve drainage and prevent flooding in low-lying areas in the country. Under this Administration, 5,521 projects were completed as of May 31, 2024, while 5,841 are ongoing.



**Capacitated DRRM stakeholders.**<sup>200</sup> On March 26, 2024, we officially activated the Civil Defense and Disaster Management Training Institute (CDTI), the country's first DRRM training institute since the passage of RA No. 10121.<sup>201</sup> This aims to enhance the competencies of other relevant institutions in DRRM and strengthen the country's disaster resilience through capacity building, knowledge transfer, and partnerships.

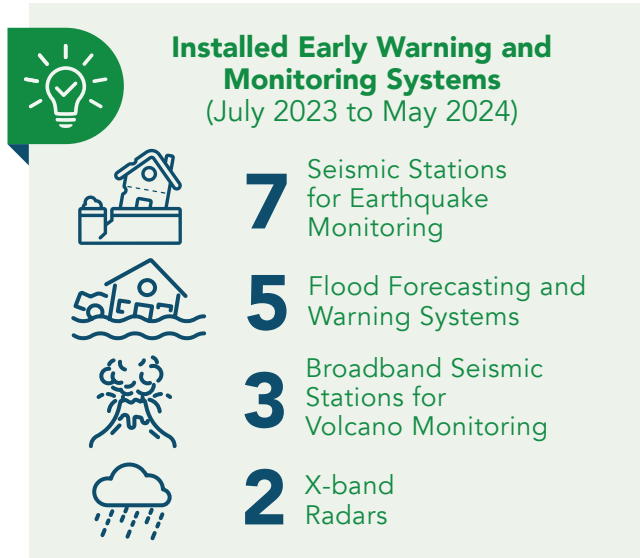
From January to May 2024, the CDTI and OCD Regional Offices conducted 79 DRRM training programs and learning initiatives and capacitated 1,188 local DRRM officers and volunteers.

We assessed the compliance of LGUs with national standards on DRRM through the *Gawad KAlamidad at Sakuna Labanan, SARiling Galing ang Kaligtasan* or KALASAG Program. We also recognized the exemplary performance and notable contributions of organizations and individuals at the frontline of DRRM.



199 OCD, June 28, 2024; and DPWH, June 25, 2024.  
200 OCD, June 28, 2024.  
201 Titled, "Philippine DRRM Act of 2010."

**Implemented national early warning and emergency alert.**<sup>202</sup> We maintained the operations and installation of early warning, weather, flood, and climate forecasting, and earthquake and volcano monitoring stations.



We also continue to prioritize the dissemination of accurate and timely information to ensure that both the national and local emergency response organizations are informed alongside the public during emergency situations.

From July 2022 to May 2024, 30,179 advisories and incident reports and 1,021 Emergency Alert and Warning Messages were disseminated to proactively inform the public regarding various calamities and incidents.

**Promoted DRRM technologies and innovations.**<sup>203</sup> This Administration supported and funded 44 projects, implemented 53 projects, and developed 75 technologies related to DRRM (see Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12 **Select DRRM Technological Innovations**



**Upgraded Emergency Disinfection System of Drinking Water**

It is a manually controlled, compact, and solar-powered mobile water treatment system that can produce up to 2,000 liters of potable water during calamities and emergencies.



**Localized Weather, Environment, and Hydromet Monitoring System (WEHLO)**

Launched on May 31, 2024, the WEHLO is a 24/7 localized weather information and impact monitoring system.



**PhilSensors\* Application**

Launched on September 08, 2023, the PhilSensors application provides near real-time weather data for public use.

\*PhilSensors is a system of early warning, flood monitoring, and weather forecasting stations that are strategically deployed in disaster-prone areas in the Philippines.

Source: DOST

Meanwhile, starting November 2022, we sustained the conduct of the *Handa Pilipinas: Innovations in DRRM Exposition*, an annual event to promote the adoption of the DOST-developed, funded, and supported technological innovations for disaster mitigation, preparedness, rehabilitation, and recovery.

During the 2023 *Handa Pilipinas*, the DOST showcased 224<sup>204</sup> DRRM technological innovations. These technologies bolster our DRRM and address multi-sectoral issues such as water scarcity, diseases, and lack of sanitation.

202 DOST, June 27, 2024; and OCD, June 28, 2024.

203 DOST, June 24 and 27, 2024.

204 The DOST showcased 82 DRRM technologies in Luzon, 68 in Visayas, and 74 in Mindanao.



The President, with DOST Secretary Renato Solidum Jr., tours the *Handa Pilipinas* 2023 Visayas Leg Exhibit in Tacloban City, Leyte on November 08, 2023.

Photo Credit: DOST

**Improved the resilience of energy infrastructure.**<sup>205</sup> Energy facilities are critical for the recovery of affected communities. On April 15, 2024, we launched the Energy Sector Emergency Operations Center (ESEOC) and Mobile Energy System (MES) as part of the Energy Secure Philippines Program. The ESEOC allows real-time monitoring of energy assets, and offers quick response in times of disasters.

Meanwhile, the MES is a solar-powered emergency response unit, which serves as a backup energy source during power outages, disaster relief operations, and sustained operations of critical infrastructure and services. As of May 31, 2024, two units of MES were turned over to the DOE, while two other units are to be turned over to the municipalities of Santa Ana and Lal-lo in Cagayan in August 2024.

### **Expanded the coverage of the National DRRM Fund (NDRRMF).**<sup>206</sup>

From 2022 to 2024, we allocated PhP61 billion for the NDRRMF. We released PhP45.71 billion to the implementing agencies and LGUs as of May 31, 2024, for aid, relief, repair, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of the communities affected by natural and human-induced disasters and other crises. Under NDRRM Resolution No. 01 s. 2024,<sup>207</sup> we recently allowed the LGUs, regardless of income classification, to utilize the NDRRMF for the repair, reconstruction, or rehabilitation of damaged local or national infrastructure.

### **Ensured Responsive Humanitarian Assistance**<sup>208</sup>

Our people deserve nothing less than a proactive government to help them effectively cope with the effects of natural disasters. This Administration assured that government programs and services are responsive and sufficient to sustain the needs of the disaster-affected families.

### **Provided early recovery services to disaster-affected families.**

The DSWD partnered with the LGUs, private sector, and other stakeholders to immediately provide relief augmentation to affected communities. They also ensured that standby funds and relief stockpile are available in the DSWD field offices.

From July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024, the DSWD provided PhP15.52 billion worth of assistance to 6.51 million disaster-affected families nationwide (see *Table 4.5*).

205 DOE, June 25, 2024.

206 DBM, June 26, 2024; and OCD, June 28, 2024.

207 Titled, "A Resolution Approving the Provision of Funding Support from the NDRRMF to all LGUs for the Repair, Reconstruction or Rehabilitation of Local or National Infrastructure regardless of Income Classification."

208 OES, June 21, 2024; DSWD, June 26, 2024; and OCD, June 28, 2024.

**Table 4.5 Assistance Provided to Disaster-Affected Families (July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024)**

Type of Assistance	Families	Amount (in PhP billion)
Food-for-Work	418	715,650* <i>*in thousand</i>
Cash-for-Work (CFW)	211,290	1.14
Emergency Shelter Assistance	239,841	1.72
Risk Resiliency Program through Cash-for-Training (CFT) and CFW	734,965	2.84
Emergency Cash Transfer	843,342	5.83
Food and Non-Food Items	4,484,251	3.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,514,107</b>	<b>15.52</b>

*Source: DSWD*

The OCD deployed emergency response teams and resources to provide needed services such as emergency telecommunications, water filtration, and food and non-food items. From July 2022 to May 2024, the OCD responded to 38 disaster-related events.

We visited affected areas immediately post-disaster to assess the situation on the ground and led the distribution of assistance to affected families.



**PhP1.06 billion**  
worth of Presidential Assistance provided to



**167 LGUs**  
heavily affected by typhoons, the Northeast Monsoon, low-pressure area (LPA), and earthquakes



The President presides over the Situation Briefing on the Effects of the Trough of the LPA in the Caraga Region in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur on February 16, 2024.

*Photo Credit: PCO*

**Enhanced disaster and emergency communications.** On January 12, 2024, we inaugurated the Disaster Response Command Center (DRCC), which serves as the central hub for disaster monitoring, reporting, and coordination of preparedness and response efforts.



The President, with DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian, inaugurates the DRCC at the DSWD Central Office in Quezon City on January 12, 2024.

*Photo Credit: PCO*

The DSWD also strategically deployed 14 Mobile Command Centers to the 14 DSWD field offices. These are equipped with advanced communication technologies to bridge communication gaps and ensure effective coordination during emergency or disaster response operations.



**Implemented the Project LAWA and BINHI.**<sup>209</sup> On February 22, 2024, we launched the Project LAWA and BINHI. The Project LAWA aims to enhance water access and management in communities prone to drought and water shortages.

Meanwhile, Project BINHI aims to promote food security in the communities by adopting climate resilient and sustainable

agricultural practices. These projects, including water reservoirs, aim to benefit 140,906 families. CFT and CFW will also be provided to beneficiaries who participated in the projects.

We constructed 90 small farm reservoirs in the provinces of Ifugao, Antique, and Davao de Oro during the pilot implementation of Project LAWA in 2023.

#### Box 4.2 Pursued the Rehabilitation of the Pasig River



In 2023, we commenced an ambitious yet worthwhile project, dubbed as the *Pasig Bigyang Buhay Muli*, to bring the Pasig River back to its former glory.

We endeavor to transform the Pasig River into a living river with safe walkways and bikeways to be surrounded by green spaces, and incorporated with flood control measures. We also plan to feature green technology such as solar lights and adopt sustainable practices such as urban gardening. We will also maximize it as a maritime highway.

*Photo Credit and Source: PCO and DHSUD*

On January 17, 2024, we inaugurated the 200-meter (m) showcase area, a commercial walkway between MacArthur Bridge and Jones Bridge and across the Manila Central Post Office (MCPO). This serves as a public park with a pedestrian-friendly walkway and water fountain, accented by lighting at night.

On June 23, 2024, we also inaugurated an additional 300-m stretch connecting the initial showcase area behind the MCPO to the Plaza Mexico in Intramuros.

209 Local Adaptation to Water Access (LAWA) and Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished (BINHI).

# Way Forward

Much still needs to be done to attain energy security in the country, but we are committed to provide reliable and affordable energy toward ensuring a high quality of life for every Filipino.

The Philippines recognizes the importance of moving toward a cleaner and sustainable energy system. Utilizing the local abundance of our renewable resources, we continue to promote investments and partner with the private sector. We are pursuing efforts to diversify our energy mix to reduce supply disruptions and price fluctuations associated with fossil fuel-based generation.

Complementary to this, we continue to work with the NGCP to ensure the timely completion of critical projects. There is an ongoing performance audit by the ERC to determine the causes of delays in the implementation of transmission projects and resolve these issues. The ERC targets to complete the audit by December 2024.

As we navigate toward the global energy transition, we are pushing for the availability of transition finance to assist the country in putting up the necessary infrastructure and market mechanisms. This ensures that our citizens will not be burdened with the cost of the transition.

To achieve full household electrification, we are accelerating the development of microgrid systems in isolated islands and communities and pursuing the interconnection of major off-grid islands to the main grid.

To help facilitate the adoption of nuclear energy in the country, we are also pursuing the ratification of nuclear-related conventions, particularly the following:

- Convention on Nuclear Safety;
- Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management;
- Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage; and
- Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

As we move toward our goal of a *Bagong Pilipinas*, we remain committed to protecting and managing our ecosystems and natural resources.

The DENR continues to formulate the National Air Quality Control Action Plan to update standards for stationary source emission, mobile source emission, and ambient air quality guideline values.

To effectively monitor our natural resources using satellite data, we are developing the Multispectral Unit for Land Assessment Earth observation satellite, which can capture images of our country at a rate of up to 139,000 square km per day or roughly one third the size of the Philippines' land area.

We are ensuring that climate change resources would be accessible. We are working for the replenishment of the PSF with a bigger budget and leveraging other financing and partnership opportunities to fund the project proposals of LGUs and other recipients aimed at

addressing climate change. In addition, we are now looking forward to working closely with the LDF Board and concerned agencies on the next steps in the finalization of the hosting arrangements for the Board in the Philippines.

We continue to put in place policies aimed at reducing our carbon footprint and transforming our economy toward low-carbon, resilient, and sustainable development. We are finalizing our processes to operationalize carbon accounting and conducting GHG inventory of key sectors for 2022, 2024, and 2026. We are also working with concerned stakeholders for the immediate implementation of the NAP and NDCIP.

The Philippines is among the countries that are rich in mineral resources. We are crafting a holistic national policy on mining to strike a balance between sustainable and responsible mining and revitalizing the critical minerals industry while ensuring the protection of the rights of the workers.

This Administration remains committed to accelerating our DRRM programs to strengthen our resilience against natural disasters. Our DRRM efforts lean toward strengthening the capacity of LGUs as the first disaster responders. We are expediting the formulation, evaluation, and implementation of local DRRM plans to prepare for and respond to the identified disaster hazards and risks of LGUs.

We are also ensuring the immediate provision of relief assistance and timely completion of disaster-resilient infrastructure projects to protect vulnerable groups and minimize loss of lives and economic losses.

We are also gearing up for the 2024 Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on DRR (APMCDRR), which the country will host in October 2024. The APMCDRR is the primary regional platform that brings together global leaders to monitor, review, and enhance cooperation for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 at the regional level.

Meanwhile, the National DRRM Council is working closely with Congress on the concept of anticipatory action as introduced by various UN humanitarian organizations. We need to explore government mechanisms that would allow our national government agencies and LGUs to mobilize assets and resources even before an impending disaster, through the declaration of a State of Imminent Disaster. As the most disaster-prone country in the world, institutionalizing anticipatory action will significantly boost our DRRM.


We also call on Congress to ensure the immediate passage of the following key legislative measures:

- Amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act;
- Waste-to-Energy Bill;
- Nuclear Energy Bill;
- Philippine Downstream Natural Gas Industry Bill;
- Excise Tax on Single-Use Plastics;
- Blue Economy Act; and
- Rationalization of the Mining Fiscal Regime.

We are determined more than ever to sustain the reforms we initiated in protecting the environment, mitigating the impact of climate change, and bolstering disaster resiliency.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff ushers the President and Commander-in-Chief during the 82<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the Araw ng Kagitingan on April 09, 2024 in Bataan.

*Photo Credit: PCO*



# CHAPTER 05

# Ensuring Peace and Order and National Security

Unity is the firm foundation through which trade, innovation, competition, and economic activity can prosper. A healthy investment climate, a bureaucracy free from corruption, and a conducive peace and order situation are vital in bolstering unity and national development.

We have come a long way in securing peace in our nation.

The Philippines has improved its ranking in the Global Peace Index (GPI) from 125<sup>th</sup> in 2022 to 104<sup>th</sup> in 2024, and was also recognized as the third safest country in Southeast Asia by Gallup Global Law and Order for 2023.<sup>210</sup> Despite these accolades, we remain focused on combatting crimes and keeping our communities safe.



*A peace agreement is only as good as the people and the parties who will implement it. Because brave may be those who wage wars, but braver are those who seek peace and who win that peace."*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
Commemoration Ceremony for  
the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing  
of the Comprehensive Agreement  
on the Bangsamoro  
April 29, 2024



Police personnel participate in a corn planting initiative in Barangay Palanogan in Calbayog City, Samar on May 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: DILG

# Maintaining Peace and Order

## Improved Public Safety<sup>211</sup>

Through rigorous and honest law enforcement operations, increased police visibility, and sustained collaboration across all sectors of society, we maintained peace and order.

**Reduced crime.** An overall decline in crime incidents was observed in the past two comparative periods or from July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2023 and July 01, 2023 to May 31, 2024. Index crime,<sup>212</sup> which includes focus crimes, namely, murder, homicide, physical injury, robbery, theft, rape, and carjacking, decreased by 12.46%, while non-index crime<sup>213</sup> decreased by 6.20% in the same comparative periods (see *Figure 5.1*).

With the advancement in technology, crime modalities also changed. Cybercrimes have steadily increased since 2013. The most prevalent cybercrimes

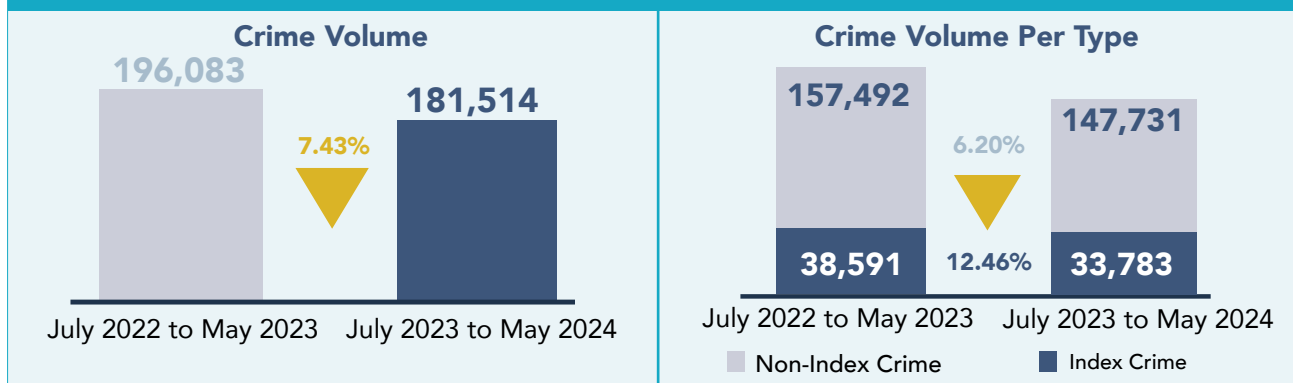


The President joins the graduation ceremony of the Bangsamoro Police Basic Recruit Course (BPBRC) in Maguindanao del Sur on April 29, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

include online scams, illegal access,<sup>214</sup> automated teller machine (ATM) or credit card fraud, computer-related identity theft, and online libel. Nevertheless, through the Philippine National Police (PNP)'s conduct of enhanced public education and collaboration with telephone companies, money remittance services, government agencies, and other service providers, we have observed a

Figure 5.1 **Peace and Order Indicator**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



Source: DILG

210 The GPI ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness, covering 99.7% of the world's population. The Gallup Global Law and Order Report helps countries measure their progress toward meeting UN SDGs focused on peace, justice, and strong institutions. (Source: GPI 2024 and Gallup)

211 DILG, June 24, 2024.

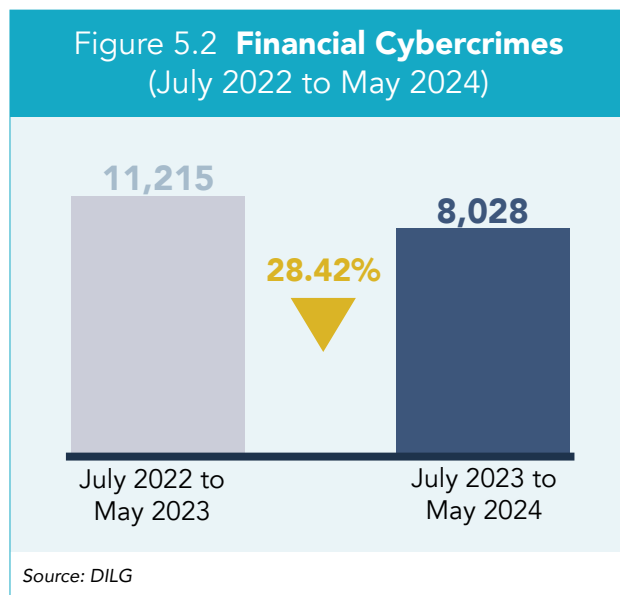
212 Serious crimes against person or property.

213 Illegal acts that violate special laws or local ordinances.

214 The access to the whole or any part of a computer system without right [Sec. 4(a)1 of RA No. 10175 or the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012].

17.93% decrease in reported cybercrimes or from 19,005 from July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2023 to 15,597 from July 01, 2023 to May 31, 2024.

Through the efforts of our law enforcement agencies and implementation of the SIM Card Registration Law, we saw a notable decrease in financial cybercrimes in the period of July 01, 2023 to May 31, 2024 as compared to July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2023 (see Figure 5.2).



With the emergence of cybercrimes, we also directed our PNP and other public safety officers to create a secure digital environment and to enhance cybersecurity. We established the National Cyber Training Institute (NCTI) under the Philippine Public Safety College to help address the needs on cybersecurity matters and improve the preparedness of our law enforcers.

**Enhanced police capabilities.** In the past two years, we have undertaken capability enhancement and training programs to improve measures against crime.



**Top 5 Cybercrime cases**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)

Swindling/estafa (Online scam)	<b>18,380</b>
Illegal access	<b>5,953</b>
Computer-related identity theft	<b>2,831</b>
Online libel	<b>2,721</b>
ATM or credit card fraud	<b>2,276</b>

Source: DILG

We acquired and provided our police force with adequate and quality equipment that bolstered their capacity to address public safety concerns. From July 2022 to May 2024, over Php5.1 billion worth of equipment was procured. This includes mobility assets, firepower, and communications, investigative, and internal security operations (ISO) equipment.


With the impending turnover of ISO from the military to the police force, the PNP needs to have the capability to effectively sustain internal peace and security and prevent the backsliding of conflict-affected communities to insurgency and terrorism.

**Improved firefighting resources.** The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) elevated its fire prevention and suppression measures to improve the protection of communities from fires and response to emergencies. We have reduced the number of LGUs without a fire station from 174 in June 2022 to 74 as of May 2024. Further, we equipped these stations with fire trucks, thus decreasing the number of LGUs




## PNP Capability Enhancement Program (July 2022 to May 2024)

### Firearms and Ammunition


	<b>22,403,391</b> cartridge 9 millimeter (mm) ball, 5.56mm ball, 40mm high-explosive dual purpose
	<b>8,492</b> 5.56mm basic assault rifle
	<b>6,299</b> 9mm striker-fired pistol
	<b>155</b> 5.56mm light machine gun

### Mobility Assets

	<b>952</b> light motorcycle
	<b>571</b> patrol jeep single cab
	<b>317</b> light transport vehicle
	<b>250</b> personnel carrier 4x4
	<b>10</b> advance life support ambulance

Source: DILG

### ISO Equipment

	<b>6,432</b> all purpose vest
	<b>3,712</b> enhanced combat helmet
	<b>27</b> Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) bomb suit
	<b>5</b> EOD robot

### Communications Equipment

	<b>5,827</b> digital mobile radio
	<b>583</b> tactical radio

### Investigative Equipment

	<b>2,887</b> field investigator crime scene kit
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without fire trucks from 211 in June 2022 to 88 as of May 2024. The DBM also released the amount of PhP2.88 billion to the BFP to ensure that LGUs will be provided with fire trucks and other firefighting equipment by end of 2024. We will further strengthen the firefighting capacity of the BFP by procuring aerial firefighting assets.

### **Strengthened community relations.**

We implemented several programs, reforms, and innovation to improve crime prevention. Our police force has not only maintained but also significantly intensified community engagement through the Revitalized *Pulis sa Barangay* (RPSB) Program. From July 2022 to May 2024, the PNP has deployed 5,119 RPSB personnel in 1,146 barangays in Regions IV-A, V, VI, VIII, X, XI, XIII, and NCR. Since its inception in 2019, the program has successfully facilitated, in partnership

with other national government agencies, various programs on infrastructure, social services, and livelihood assistance.

We are developing a police force that is more capable, professional, and responsive to the needs of a *Bagong Pilipinas*.

### **Combatted Illegal Drugs**

Illegal drugs remain the scourge of society. To combat the illegal drug trade, we shifted our strategy to a more focused approach that will effectively cut supply and reduce demand.

As we saw the importance of holistic crime prevention approaches rooted in community engagement and wellness, we directed our law enforcers to adopt and pursue a public health approach while targeting the large-scale drug syndicates.





DILG Secretary Benjamin Abalos Jr. and partners join the *Buhay Ingatan, Droga'y Ayawan (BIDA) Rise and Run from Drugs* in Iloilo City on April 20, 2024.

Photo Credit: DILG

### Curbing demand for drugs.

The government intensified its BIDA Campaign. The DILG, along with other partners, celebrated BIDA's first anniversary on March 23, 2024 at SM Mall of Asia Concert Grounds with 60,000 participants. Similarly, 268 regional and LGU BIDA launches were also conducted in 16 regions.

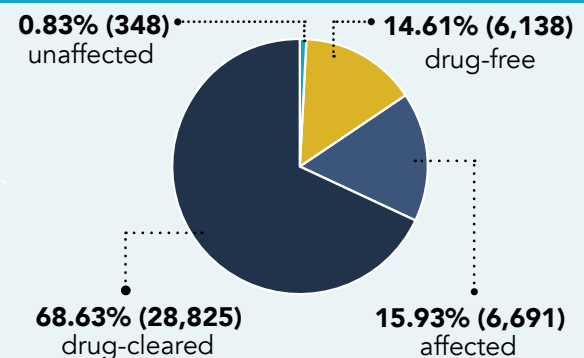
To raise awareness on the impact of illegal drugs, we partnered with the LGUs that conducted several programs involving the community. These include BIDA Fun Runs, BIDA *Serbisyo* Caravan, and BIDA Symposium activities.

The DILG also consistently monitored and evaluated the performance and effectiveness of the Provincial, City, Municipal, and Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (BADACs). In 2023, 246 LGUs with the best implementation of their anti-illegal drug programs and rehabilitation efforts were recognized and awarded

with cash incentives through the Anti-Drug Abuse Council. From January to March 2024, roll-out training for the strengthening of the institutional capacities of BADAC were conducted in 13,018 barangays.

As of May 2024, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) reported that of the 42,002 barangays, 68.63% have been declared drug-cleared<sup>215</sup> and 14.61% drug-free<sup>216</sup> (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 **Status of Barangay Drug Clearing Operations**  
(as of May 31, 2024)



Source: PDEA

**Adopted a health-focused approach to drug addiction.**<sup>217</sup> We also continuously implemented the *Balay Silangan* Reformation Program, an instrument for reforming and reintegrating the drug dependents and offenders back into society.

The PDEA also enhanced the implementation of treatment and rehabilitation programs for Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUDs) and drug offenders. The Protocol for Providing Assistance for Voluntary Rehabilitation and Intervention and the Creation of Regional Public Desk

215 Drug-cleared barangays are those classified as previously drug-affected, subjected to drug clearing operation and declared cleared from any illegal drug activities pursuant to the parameters set forth. (Source: PDEA)

216 Drug-free barangays refer to unaffected barangays that have been vetted and confirmed by Regional Oversight Committee on barangay drug clearing. (Source: PDEA)

217 PDEA, June 26, 2024.



**Balay Silangan  
Reformation Center**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



**186 centers**  
inaugurated nationwide



**3,093 graduates**  
produced by the centers

Source: PDEA

was issued on November 21, 2023 to better assist PWUDs in gaining access to appropriate interventions. Since its implementation, 131 individuals who sought access to drug treatment and rehabilitation program had been assisted.

Under the Department of Justice (DOJ)'s rehabilitation and reintegration assistance, more than 100,000 PWUDs were enrolled from July 01, 2022 to March 31, 2024 (see Figure 5.4).

The DSWD continued to implement the *Yakap Bayan* Framework of Intervention, a cyclical rehabilitation and reintegration framework formulated in 2017 to assist Recovering PWUDs (RPWUDs). In 2023, over 8,390 RPWUDs were reintegrated



*Sa rehabilitation narealize ko na ang pagbabago, nag-uumpisa talaga sa sarili. Ginusto ko talagang magbago para sa kinabukasan ng aking pamilya. At dahil sa aftercare, nagkaroon ako ng hanapbuhay, naging buo ang aming pamilya, at mas lalo kaming naging masaya."*

"LA"

Yakap Bayan Program Beneficiary

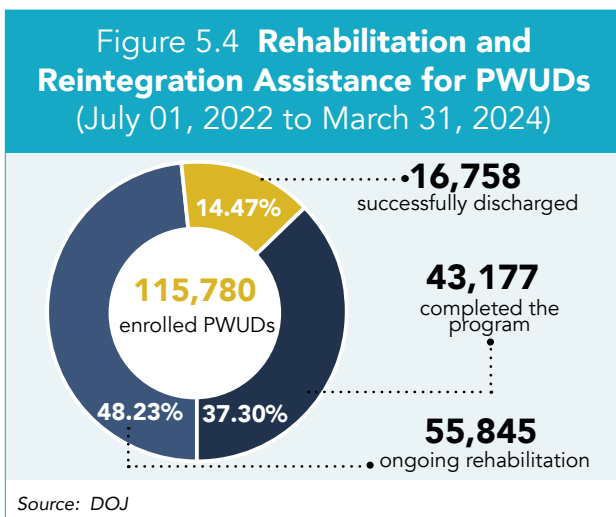
into their families and communities. They were also provided with aftercare and eventual social integration services such as relapse prevention sessions, counseling sessions, health and fitness therapy, spiritual interventions, and skills training.

As of April 2024, 134 LGUs replicated the *Yakap Bayan* Program in their respective localities.<sup>218</sup>

In the *Bagong Pilipinas*, we are giving PWUDs opportunities to change and transform their lives for the better.

**Focused approach on cutting illegal drug supply.** To eradicate illegal drugs, the PDEA and other law enforcement agencies adopted a more effective approach that targeted large-scale drug syndicates. In the past year, we were

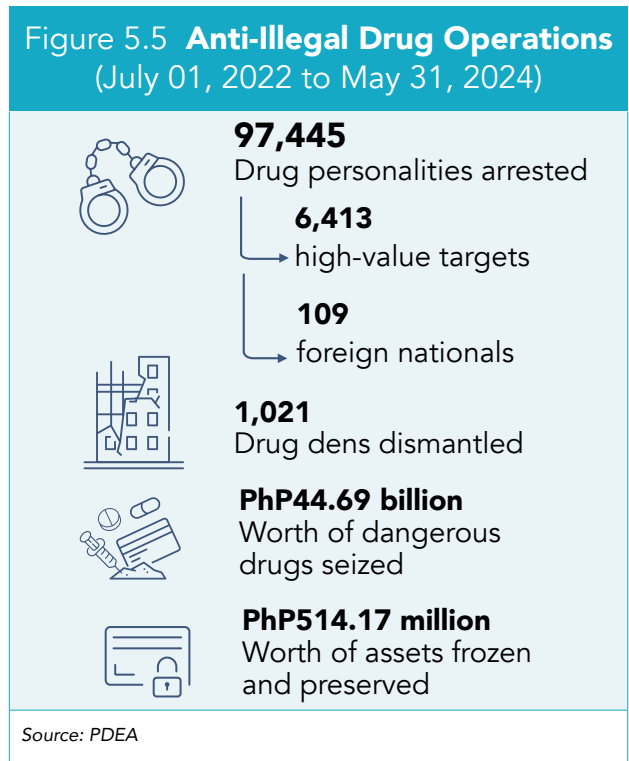
**Figure 5.4 Rehabilitation and Reintegration Assistance for PWUDs**  
(July 01, 2022 to March 31, 2024)



Source: DOJ

218 DSWD, June 26, 2024.

successful in our operations as evidenced by our significant drug hauls (see Figure 5.5).



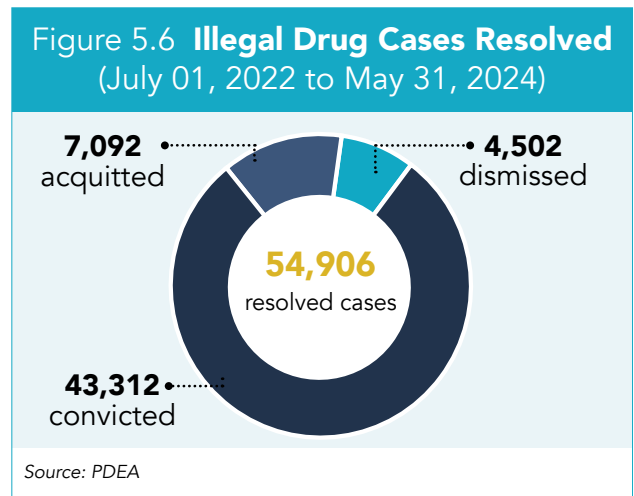
On September 22, 2023, 529.70 kg of shabu were seized during the interdiction operation conducted by elements of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), PDEA, BOC, and National Intelligence Coordinating Agency at the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Port of Subic, Zambales.

On October 05, 2023, 274.59 kg of shabu were seized during the interdiction operation conducted by joint elements of the PDEA, BOC, and PNP at the Manila International Container Port in Tondo, Manila.

We recorded the second biggest drug haul in history on April 15, 2024 when 1,159.25 kg of shabu worth PhP7.88 billion was seized during a PNP checkpoint operation in Alitagtag, Batangas.

**Continued prosecution of drug cases.** From July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024, the PDEA and other law enforcement agencies filed 92,157 drug cases against arrested illegal drug personalities nationwide. Out of the total cases filed, 54,906 (59.58%) were resolved,<sup>219</sup> while 37,251 (40.42%) are ongoing trial (see Figure 5.6).

We will remain focused on dismantling drug networks, intercepting illicit drug shipments, and prosecuting illegal drug cases. We will not allow these lawless activities to derail our vision of a progressive *Bagong Pilipinas*.



The President and DILG Secretary Abalos inspect the seized shabu in Alitagtag, Batangas on April 16, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

219 The number of resolved cases is based on Decisions and Orders received from July 2022 to May 2024, regardless of what year the cases were filed.

## Sustaining the Gains of Peace



DOJ Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla leads the release of more than 600 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) in Muntinlupa City on January 30, 2024.

Photo Credit: DOJ

### Supported Justice Reforms<sup>220</sup>

We are steadfast in strengthening mechanisms to uphold the rule of law, improve the country's human rights situation, and deliver real justice in real time. We are introducing reforms that will ensure a just system—one that upholds the rights of PDLs, recognizes the potential in every individual, champions rehabilitation, and allows meaningful contribution to society.

### Improved disposition of cases.

We underscored the need to pursue the filing of “high-quality” cases or those with strong prospects of conviction to improve our prosecution of criminal cases. As such, the DOJ Secretary directed prosecutors to evaluate complaints preliminarily based on the “reasonable certainty of conviction”<sup>221</sup> standard prior to docketing for preliminary investigation and inquest proceedings.

In 2023, about 4,870 cases were dismissed or terminated for lack of probable cause, contributing to our efforts to declog court dockets. After a full year of implementation, the DOJ has attained a disposition rate of 95.86% and secured a conviction rate of 93.59% vis-à-vis court disposition (see Figure 5.7 and Table 5.1).

Figure 5.7 **Status of Complaints handled by the DOJ**  
(April 01, 2023 to April 30, 2024)

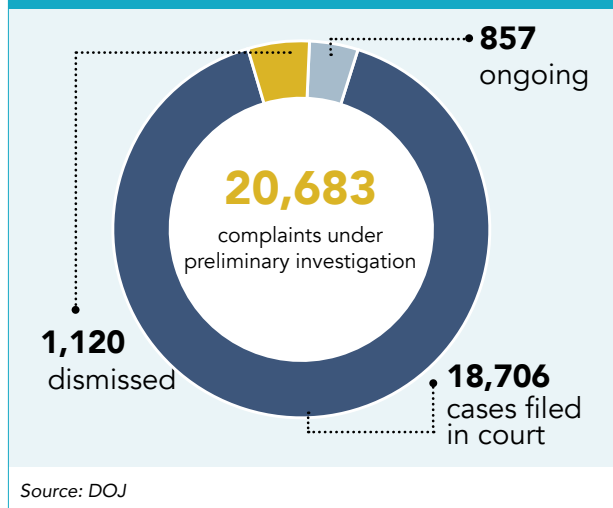


Table 5.1 **Court Disposition**  
(April 01, 2023 to April 30, 2024)

<b>Total Court Disposition</b>	<b>3,757</b>
Cases convicted	3,516
Cases dismissed	179
Cases acquitted	62
<b>Conviction Rate</b>	<b>93.59%</b>

Source: DOJ

220 DOJ, June 26, 2024.

221 There is reasonable certainty of conviction when a *prima facie* case exists based on the evidence-at-hand including but not limited to witnesses, documentary evidence, real evidence, and the like, and such evidence, on its own and if left uncontroverted by accused, shall be sufficient to establish all the elements of the crime or offense charged, and consequently warrant a conviction beyond reasonable doubt (DOJ Circular Nos. 16 and 20, s. 2023).

### **Implemented justice reforms.**

We directed our prosecutors to indicate only 50% of the recommended bail for indigent persons as stated in the Bail Bond Guide or a maximum of PhP10,000.00, whichever is lower. By taking into consideration the financial capacity of respondents, we are able to prevent the detention of indigents who are unable to afford the amount set by the court for crimes that are bailable.

Addressing the chronic problem of jail and prison overcrowding is vital in enhancing our criminal justice system. In two years, our jail congestion rate had declined by 65 percentage points, easing to 322% as of June 2024 from 387% in June 2022.<sup>222</sup> We further observed a 93 percentage point decrease in prison congestion rate from 332% in December 2023 to 239% as of May 2024. We are also looking forward to the regionalization of the prison system to address overpopulation and aid in the reintegration of PDLs.

Apart from jail decongestion and rehabilitation, we aim to create a correctional system focused on community-based treatment programs. In 2023, we facilitated the graduation of 26,333 probationers and 920 parolees from the Parole and Probation Program. Modernizing and strengthening this program will give us more responsive and sustainable interventions for community-based rehabilitation of PDLs.

As of June 10, 2024, 3,644 PDLs were released by reason of acquittal, expiration of sentence, expiration of sentence with Good Conduct Time Allowance, probation, *habeas corpus* and parole.

We also digitized 48,000 records with the Single Carpeta System under the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), unifying the records of the BuCor and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

On the petitions for parole and executive clemency, as of May 31, 2024, we granted 3,474 parole and recommended 1,684 PDLs for executive clemencies, of which 92 were granted. We amended the Revised Rules on Parole and Executive Clemency in August 2023, which now provides that all PDLs sentenced to *reclusion perpetua* or life imprisonment who are seventy years of age and have served a minimum of 10 years are qualified for executive clemency review. This shortened the minimum qualification of service of sentence from 15, 20, or 25 years to a mere 10 years, which would benefit PDLs who are of old age and are sickly.

We also continued to render legal representation, assistance, and counselling free of charge to indigent persons in criminal, civil, labor, administrative and other quasi-judicial cases through the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) (see Figure 5.8).



The DOJ forges an MOU with private institutions to launch the Project Arts, Crafts, and E-Commerce, which seeks to improve the technical skills of female PDLs at the Correctional Institution for Women in the DOJ Building on April 19, 2024.

Photo Credit: DOJ

222 DILG, June 26, 2024.

Figure 5.8 **Accomplishments of the PAO**  
(July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024)



**over 24.8 million**  
Concerns addressed



**over 1.66 million\***  
Cases handled



**604,241**  
Terminated criminal cases



**534,804**  
Acquittals and other favorable dispositions



**88.51%**  
Favorable disposition rate in criminal cases



**68,269**  
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) handled



**62,763**  
ADR resolved



**91.93%**  
ADR success rate



**1:2**  
Public Attorney-to-Court ratio

\*with over 400,000 ongoing cases in June 2023

Source: DOJ

**Promoted and protected human rights.** We signed AO No. 22<sup>223</sup> on May 08, 2024, which established the Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination (SCHRC). The SCHRC shall sustain initiatives and accomplishments of the UN Joint Programme for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Philippines in the areas of law enforcement, criminal justice, and policy-making.

The body shall also implement a human rights-based approach toward control and counterterrorism and measures to guarantee that no one is subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

### Combating Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment



On March 14, 2024, the DOJ, PNP, and the NBI launched the Guidelines in Gathering Evidence and Case Build-up of Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment, which established clear procedures that will equip authorities to effectively investigate and prosecute sexual offenders in the cyberspace.

Source: DOJ

Our active implementation of programs against human trafficking, maintained the country's Tier-1 status in the US' Trafficking in Persons Report for the past eight years (see Chapter 6). These programs include the provision of trauma-informed care training for police, social workers, and prosecutors, recording of child survivor interviews to prevent repeating testimonies in front of their traffickers, and strengthening survivor engagement measures.

**Enhanced border control and management.** The Philippines' archipelagic features, apart from the increasingly complex threats and risks, pose a perennial challenge in securing the country's borders. However, it is necessary to strike a balance between imposing stringent regulations

223 Titled, "Further Enhancing Mechanisms for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Country and Creating the Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination for the Purpose."

to protect our national interests and marketing the Philippines as a global tourist and investment destination. In addition, there is a need to harmonize, if not replace, our decades-old immigration laws, namely Commonwealth Act No. 613<sup>224</sup> and RA No. 562,<sup>225</sup> to keep up with the present times.

Hence, it is imperative to improve our immigration systems and define our visa policy to prevent illegal recruitment, human trafficking, and irregular migration incidents. This is vital in boosting the country's economic growth, attracting more foreign investments, encouraging tourism, and creating more jobs.

From June 2023 to May 2024, the DFA issued 184,775 visas to foreign nationals. We also launched the beta testing of the electronic visa (e-Visa) system in India on April 05, 2024. As of June 05, 2024, 257 e-Visas were issued to Indian nationals.<sup>226</sup>

Further, the DOJ-Bureau of Immigration (BI) has been resolute in its enforcement of immigration control systems, such as exclusion, deferred departure, apprehension, and deportation, which redound to national security, public safety, and public health. The BI also commits to develop, implement, and continually improve its systems and processes through automation and modernization (see *Chapter 7*).

We reaffirm our thrust to enhance our justice system and crime prevention strategies to safeguard the people's basic rights and bring peace and harmony to the country.

## Pursuing Inclusive and Lasting Peace

The effective implementation of the Philippine peace process depends on the transformation of former rebels, their families, and communities. We worked relentlessly to implement programs that sustained the gains of the peace process as we usher in a *Bagong Pilipinas*.

### Intensified the implementation of peace agreements<sup>227</sup>

**Activated the National Government-Bangsamoro Government Intergovernmental Relations Body (IGRB) mechanisms.** Under the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), the IGRB was created to coordinate and resolve issues between the Philippine Government and the MILF through regular consultation and continuing negotiation in a non-adversarial manner.



The President, along with (from left to right) BARMM Minister for Basic, Higher, and Technical Education Mohagher Iqbal, DBM Secretary Pangandaman, and BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Ebrahim attend the 17<sup>th</sup> IGRB Meeting in Pasay City on February 08, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

224 Titled, "The Philippine Immigration Act of 1940."

225 Titled, "Alien Registration Act of 1950."

226 DFA, June 25, 2024.

227 OPAPRU, June 25, 2024.



Presidential Adviser for Peace, Reconciliation and Unity Carlito Galvez Jr. (second from right), Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte (rightmost), and representatives from the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), and *Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas/Revolutionary Proletarian Army/Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPM-P/RPA/ABB)* lead the peace bell ringing ceremony at the Quezon Memorial Circle on September 05, 2023.

Photo Credit: Office of the Presidential Adviser for Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU)

On November 09, 2023, all seven IGRB mechanisms<sup>228</sup> were established and operationalized. The mechanisms are critical to the development of the BARMM into a leading commercial, investment, and tourism hub.

**Integrated former combatants in the police force.** On April 29, 2024, we welcomed at least 100 former members of the MILF and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) of the Batch “BAKAS-LIPI” to the Police Regional Office Bangsamoro Autonomous Region, after completing the BPBRC. This is the first time that former MILF combatants have joined the police force pursuant to Article XI of the BOL.

**Granting of amnesty to former rebels.**<sup>229</sup>

On November 22, 2023, we signed proclamations<sup>230</sup> granting amnesty to the former members of the RPM-P/RPA/ABB; Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF); MILF; and MNLF. Through EO No. 47 s. 2023,<sup>231</sup> we reestablished the National Amnesty Commission (NAC). We would like to thank the House of Representatives and the Senate for passing the resolutions regarding the amnesty proclamations.

The NAC released the IRR for the said proclamations on May 15, 2024. As of June 25, 2024, the NAC has received 125 applications (see *Figure 5.9*).<sup>232</sup>

228 These IGRB mechanisms include the (i) Philippine Congress-Bangsamoro Parliament Forum; (ii) Intergovernmental Fiscal Policy Board; (iii) Joint Body for the Zones of Joint Cooperation; (iv) Intergovernmental Infrastructure Development Board; (v) Intergovernmental Energy Board; (vi) Bangsamoro Sustainable Development Board; and (vii) the Council of Leaders.

229 OPAPRU, June 25, 2024; and NAC, June 25, 2024.

230 Proclamation Nos. 403, 404, 405 and 406, s. 2024.

231 Titled, “Amending Executive Order No. 125, Series of 2021, Titled, Creation of the National Amnesty Commission.”

232 NAC, June 25, 2024.





## Status of Implementation of Peace Agreements

(as of May 31, 2024)

### GPH-MILF Peace Table\*



**26,132** of 40,000 combatants and **4,625** weapons were decommissioned



**1,599** loose firearms turned in and **4,346** stenciled under the Small Arms and Light Weapons program



**3,690** decommissioned combatants (DCs) and next of kin graduated from the Alternative Learning System (ALS)



**1,255** DCs and next of kin graduated from the TVET Program



**24** Joint Peace and Security Teams deployed



**One rural health unit** with birthing facility turned over to North Cotabato

### GPH-MNLF Peace Table\*



**2,863** combatants verified and profiled for medical checkup, civil registration, and financial assistance



**1,991** firearms surrendered



**1,848** firearms verified and documented



**1,705** combatants completed the verification and socio-economic profiling process, with civil registration, enrollment to the National ID system and financial assistance



**518** combatants and next of kin graduated from the TVET program

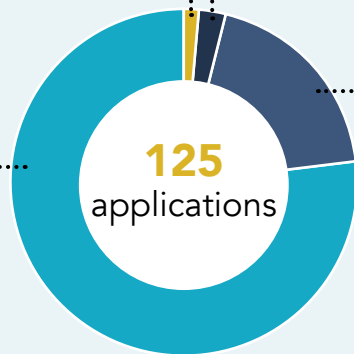
\*Government of the Philippines

Source: OPAPRU

Figure 5.9 Applications for Amnesty (as of June 25, 2024)

2 RPM-P/  
RPA/ABB

3 MNLF



96 CPP-  
NPA-NDF

24 MILF

Source: NAC

## Empowering Women in the Peace Process



On December 11, 2023, the OPAPRU, Philippine Commission on Women, DFA, UN Women, diplomatic communities, and civil society organizations launched the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security 2023-2033, which highlights the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Source: OPAPRU

### Nearing Conclusion of the Cordillera Bodong Administration– Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CBA-CPLA) Peace Agreement (as of May 31, 2024)



**80.42%** of the deliverables of the CBA-CPLA peace process had been accomplished

Source: OPAPRU

We support the aspirations of the BARMM toward self-determination, particularly on the peaceful, orderly, and credible conduct of their first elections in 2025. We remain committed to ensuring the fulfillment of Marawi's rebuilding process to uplift the lives of our Mindanaoan brothers and sisters. We are closely monitoring and unclogging issues that have stalled the completion of Marawi's rebuilding.

### Supported local governance in the Bangsamoro

**Enacted five of seven priority legislations.** The BTA Parliament had enacted five of its seven priority legislations, namely: the (i) Bangsamoro Administrative Code; (ii) Bangsamoro Civil Service Code; (iii) Bangsamoro Education Code; (iv) Bangsamoro Electoral Code; and (v) the Bangsamoro Local Government Code (BLGC). The BLGC, which was approved on September 28, 2023, provides for the empowerment of LGUs and local communities, facilitation of gradual devolution of power, equitable revenue sharing, promotion of democratization, and supervision between the Bangsamoro government and the LGUs.

Two remaining codes have yet to be enacted: (i) the Bangsamoro Revenue Code, which has advanced to second reading on February 29, 2024; and (ii) the Bangsamoro Indigenous Peoples Code, which was filed before the Parliament on February 21, 2024.

As of May 14, 2024, the BARMM parliamentary and statutory committees are conducting public hearings and focus group discussions with stakeholders to ensure thorough deliberations for both codes.

**Increased investments in the BARMM.**<sup>233</sup> Our peace efforts have ushered significant socio-economic development in the BARMM. Investment levels have surged by 140%, from PhP1.3 billion in 2022 to PhP3.1 billion in 2023. In the first quarter of 2024, approved investments in the region reached PhP1.7 billion. The region's poverty incidence also decreased by 21.1 percentage points from 55.9% in the first semester of 2018 to 34.8% in the first semester of 2023.

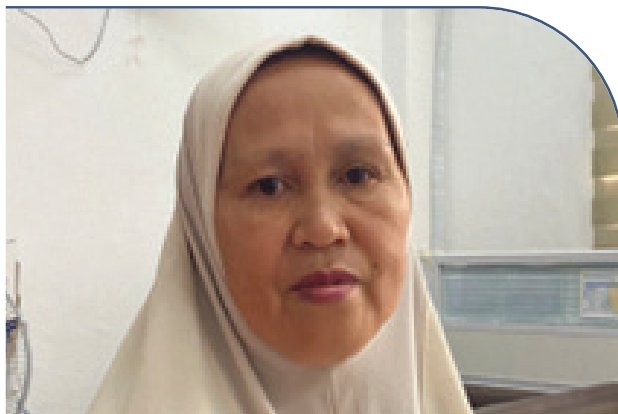
This is a testament to our unwavering commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment and implementing robust economic policies.

Further, such substantial inflow of investment not only signifies growing confidence in the region's potential, but also translates to tangible benefits for our communities. Our efforts in improving the business environment, coupled with our ongoing commitment to peace and security, are making the BARMM an attractive destination for both domestic and international investors.

233 NEDA, June 28, 2024; and DTI, June 25, 2024.

**Institutionalized Marawi rehabilitation.**<sup>234</sup> Through AO No. 14, s. 2023,<sup>235</sup> we institutionalized the recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation efforts in Marawi City and other affected localities and streamlined functions of concerned agencies involved therein.

By placing the direct supervision of Marawi rehabilitation under the Office of the President, we can ensure that the progression of all Marawi rehabilitation projects and processing of compensation claims will be conducted with utmost urgency and responsiveness.



*Alhamdulillah! I am incredibly grateful for the assistance I received through the MCB. Thanks to the government’s initiative to compensate those of us in ground zero, I can now finally repair my home and return to a sense of normalcy. This compensation is a blessing, and I am deeply appreciative of everyone involved.”*

Noronisa Mustapha  
Structural and Personal Property Claimant



### Status of Marawi Victims Compensation

(July 04, 2023 to June 15, 2024)

Since we started receiving applications for compensation for loss of properties or lives due to the Marawi siege, we received **14,083 applications**, broken down as follows:

Multiple claims	<b>8,093</b>
Other property claims	<b>5,522</b>
Structural property claims	<b>193</b>
Death claims	<b>176</b>
Multiple claims with death claims	<b>99</b>

The Marawi Compensation Board (MCB) Secretariat has evaluated **942 claims** and recommended to the Board for adjudication.

<b>Resolved</b>	<b>497</b>
Approved	387
<b>Awarded</b>	<b>139</b>
Disapproved	110

The MCB has approved **387** claims amounting to **PhP702,966,301.70** and disbursed **PhP222,177,217.43**.

Source: MCB

234 MCB, June 24, 2024.

235 Titled, "Institutionalization of the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Rehabilitation Efforts in the City of Marawi and Streamlining the Functions of Implementing Government Agencies Involved Therein."

# Winning the Fight Against Insurgency and Terrorism

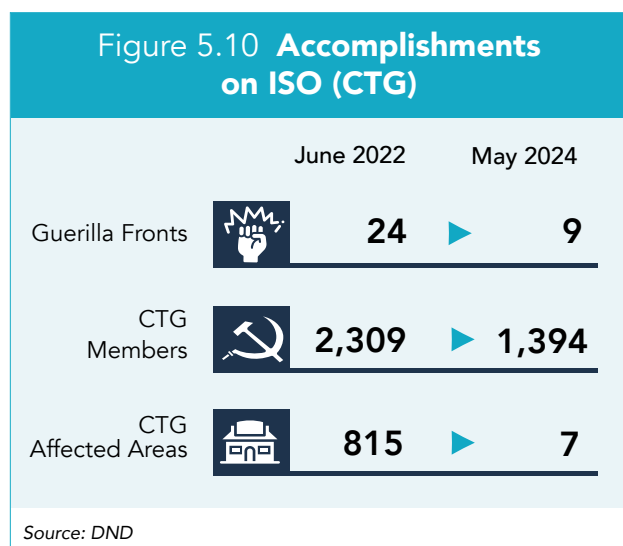


A member of the Abu Sayyaf Group voluntarily surrenders to the 1102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade in Barangay Tandu Bato, Luuk, Sulu on May 23, 2023.

Photo Credit: AFP

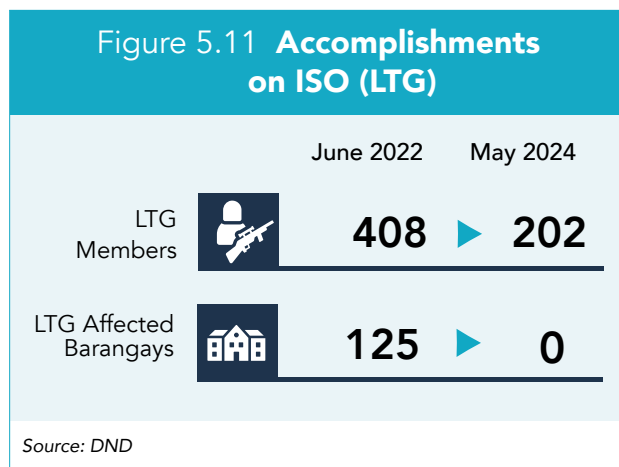
## Sustained the Momentum of Operations for Internal Security<sup>236</sup>

After achieving strategic victory against the Communist Terrorist Group (CTG), the AFP intensified its operations toward the total defeat of CTG units and clearing of affected areas (see Figure 5.10).



As of May 2024, the remaining nine weakened guerilla fronts of the CTG are targeted to be dismantled by the end of 2024.

The AFP has also significantly reduced the forces of Local Terrorist Groups (LTGs) through intensified intelligence-driven operations and by preventing and countering radicalization and violent extremism activities (see Figure 5.11).



236 DND, June 28, 2024.

### Mobilized the Whole-of-Nation Approach in the Pursuit of Peace

To promote true and lasting peace, we complemented the military’s efforts with the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC)’s whole-of-nation approach. This harmonizes the delivery of basic services and social development in conflict-affected areas and vulnerable communities.

Among the strategies to end the communist armed conflict under the NTF-ELCAC is the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP). It provides assistance to qualified former CTG rebels and *Militia ng Bayan* members to give them an opportunity to transition into productive members of society.

**E-CLIP accomplishments.**<sup>237</sup> From July 2022 to April 2024, 17,984 former rebels and former violent extremists that surrendered were covered under the E-CLIP. In the same period, PhP313.20 million worth of assistance were provided to beneficiaries such as immediate, livelihood, and reintegration assistance, and firearms remuneration.

**Barangay Development Program (BDP).**<sup>238</sup> Another program of the NTF-ELCAC is the BDP, which aims to provide identified barangays (i.e., those cleared from CTG influence) funding for key infrastructure and socioeconomic projects such as FMRs, school buildings, and electrification. Some of these barangays are in GIDAs with no direct access to government services (see *Figures 5.12 and 5.13*).

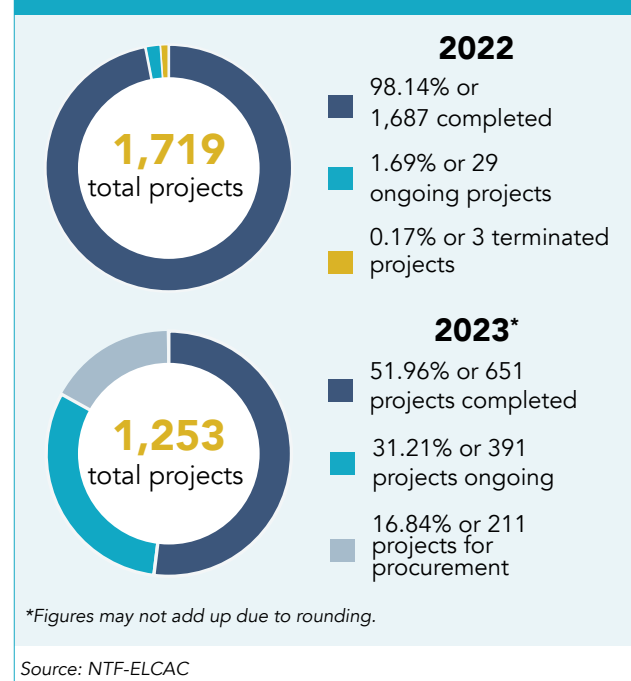
**Amnesty for former rebels.**<sup>239</sup> As one of the final steps toward total victory against the CTG and to provide former rebels with an opportunity to fully reintegrate into society, we are implementing Proclamation No. 404. This will grant amnesty to former members of the CPP-NPA-NDF.



The NAC Local Amnesty Board in Cotabato City receives the amnesty applications of 62 former members of the CPP-NPA-NDF, in partnership with the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Philippine Army, on June 21, 2024.

Photo Credit: NAC

Figure 5.12 Status of BDP Projects (as of June 21, 2024)

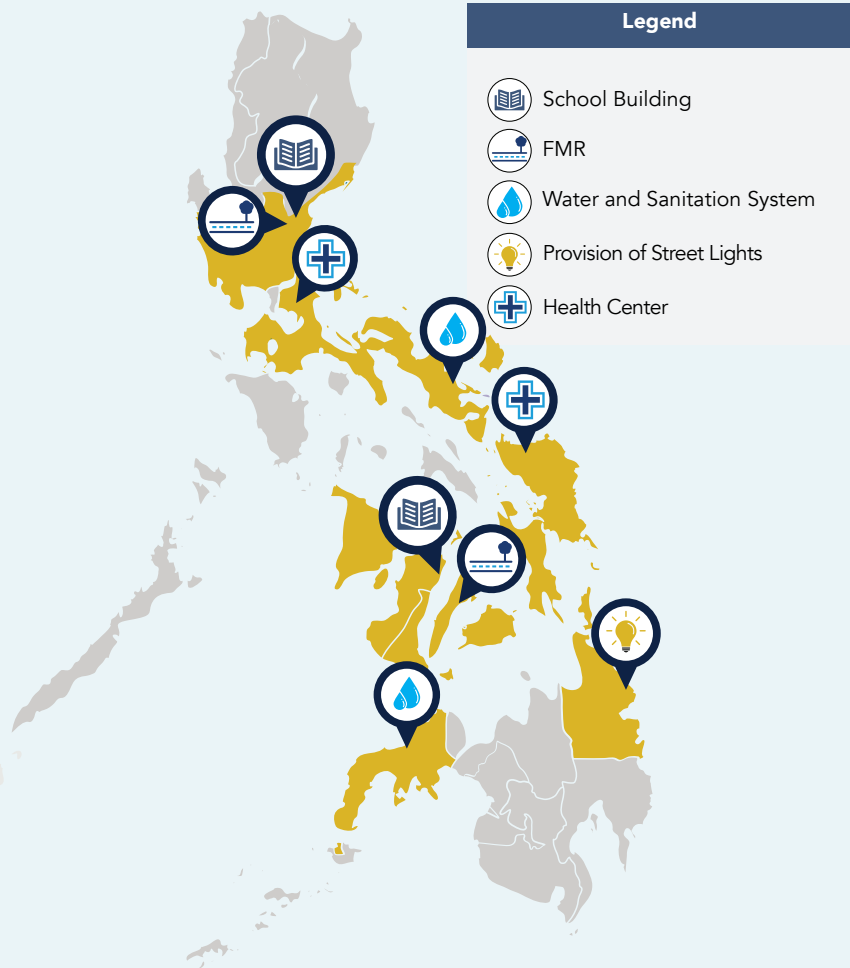
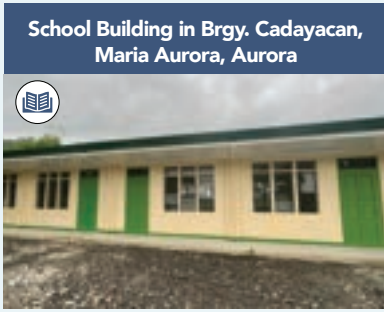


237 DND, June 28, 2024; and NTF-ELCAC, June 27, 2024.

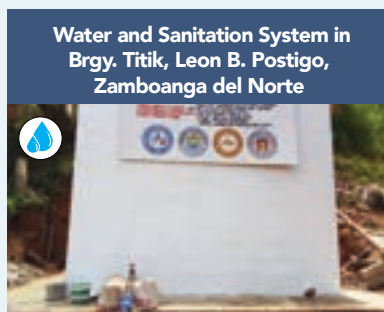
238 NTF-ELCAC, June 27, 2024.

239 NAC, June 25, 2024.

Figure 5.13 Completed BDP Projects



Legend	
	School Building
	FMR
	Water and Sanitation System
	Provision of Street Lights
	Health Center



Source: NTF-ELCAC

# Upholding Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity



AFP troops stationed at Likas Island, Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) salute to the Philippine flag during a ceremony held on September 22, 2023.

*Photo Credit: AFP*

We will vigorously defend what is ours. As a rule-abiding member in the community of nations, the Philippines will continue to be guided by the rule of law as we uphold our sovereignty and territorial integrity and exercise our sovereign rights in the maritime areas under our jurisdiction. As stewards of our maritime resources, it is our responsibility to ensure that our nation's future generations will benefit from and enjoy our natural resources.

## **Sustained Diplomatic and Legal Response to Tensions in the West Philippine Sea (WPS)**<sup>240</sup>

The Philippines remains unyielding in defending its sovereignty, sovereign rights,

and jurisdiction through firm but peaceful means, particularly through dialogue and diplomacy.

The 1982 UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award remain the touchstone of this policy. Guided by these principles, the DFA filed 66 diplomatic protests in 2023 alone and 27 from January 01 to June 05, 2024 against China's illegal, coercive, aggressive, and deceptive actions in the WPS. These include their continued illegal presence, harassment of Filipino fisherfolk, and disruption of legitimate Philippine activities within our own exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf such as rotation and resupply (RORE) missions to Ayungin Shoal.

240 DFA, June 25, 2024.

At the same time, we engaged like-minded partners in mobilizing international support for upholding the rule of law in the South China Sea (SCS).

We also engaged China through high-level dialogue and diplomacy. In these engagements, the Philippines remained firm yet constructive.



The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) conducts maritime patrol in the vicinity of Kalayaan on February 09, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCG

### Safeguarding our Fisherfolk and the Seas<sup>241</sup>

The safety and welfare of our fisherfolk remain our priority. We are firm in our commitment to defend our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction. We seek to address any issue through peaceful dialogue and consultation so that our Filipino fisherfolk would be able to fish in their traditional fishing grounds and in the EEZ without fear of external threats.



### The Philippines officially submits to the UN its entitlement to an Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) in the West Palawan region in the WPS

On June 14, 2024, the Philippines submitted information to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) to register the country's entitlement to an ECS in the West Palawan region in the WPS.

Our submission is significant in securing the Philippines' sovereign rights and maritime jurisdictions in the WPS, noting that the 2016 Award on the SCS Arbitration confirmed the Philippines' maritime entitlements and rejected those that exceeded geographic and substantive limits under the UNCLOS.



The Philippine Mission to the UN officially hands over the Philippines' submission to the UN CLCS in New York, US on June 14, 2024.

Photo Credit: DFA

Source: DFA

241 DOTr, June 24, 2024.





PCG personnel are *en route* to apprehend a vessel conducting illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing within the vicinity waters off Hilongos, Leyte on April 15, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCG

From July 2022 to May 2024, the PCG conducted 63 maritime patrols, 52 security escorts for RORE missions, and 18 maritime domain awareness flights in the KIG to monitor foreign vessel presence as well as provide support to Filipino fisherfolk.

As a result, the number of Filipino fishing boats operating in the waters of the municipality of Kalayaan rose from 159 boats in 2022 to about 350 in 2023, with a monthly average of about 70 boats. In 2022, the average was at 25 boats per month.

The PCG is also performing maritime law enforcement functions to suppress illegal activities in our seas. From July 2022 to May 2024, the PCG curbed 522 illegal maritime activities, such as smuggling, illegal fishing, illegal transport of forest products, trafficking of prohibited drugs, human trafficking, and robbery against ships.<sup>242</sup>

## Established Effective Presence in our Maritime Borders<sup>243</sup>

As much as the Philippines desires the peaceful resolution of disputes, we must always be ready to take measures to defend our territory.

Maritime and aerial domain awareness is essential for us to detect external threats and prevent any illegal intrusion in our country's entry points. From July 2022 to May 2024, the AFP conducted 1,482 and 485 surface and aerial maritime patrols, respectively, to strengthen maritime domain awareness in the Philippine territory.

## Improved the Morale and Welfare of Soldiers<sup>244</sup>

As of May 2024, we had provided funding for the needs of our military hospitals. Camp Navarro General Hospital in Zamboanga City received PhP80.9 million for the procurement of various medical equipment and Veterans Memorial Medical Center received PhP150 million for the acquisition of a Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine.



The President visits wounded-in-action soldiers at the Army General Hospital in Taguig City on February 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

242 DOTr, June 24, 2024.

243 DND, June 28, 2024.

244 DND, June 28, 2024.

The AFP's ability to effectively perform external defense missions relies heavily on its capability development. The government fully supports the AFP in its efforts to improve its capabilities, including training and exercises, equipment, and facilities. In 2024, we approved the pursuit of Re-Horizon 3 or the revised third phase of the Revised AFP Modernization Program to capacitate our Armed Forces for territorial defense.



Two new T-129 ATAK helicopters are formally accepted in a ceremony at the Philippine Air Force Major Danilo Atienza Air Base in Cavite on May 17, 2024.

Photo Credit: DND

## Engaged International Defense and Security Partners<sup>245</sup>

We engaged our defense and security partners not only to enhance our defense capability but also to present a common front on geopolitical issues. In the past year, we have inked agreements on defense cooperation with new friends and partners. These agreements will help us further strengthen our capacity amidst the various threats we face. We will sustain our momentum of pursuing partnerships with other like-minded nations as we continue to face external threats.

In addition, it is also important to have joint exercises among militaries so that partner countries can learn how to work together on a practical level.

### **Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA).**

The first Multilateral MCA with Australia, Japan, and the US was conducted in April 2024 within the EEZ of the Philippines. The activity aimed to test the interoperability of the AFP, alongside the US Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), Australian Defence Force, and Japan Self-Defense Forces.



## Signed Bilateral Defense Agreements

(June 2023 to June 2024)



### **Sweden**

MOU concerning Cooperation in the Acquisition for Defence Materiel signed on June 03, 2023



### **United Kingdom**

MOU on Defense Cooperation signed on January 11, 2024



### **The Netherlands**

MOU on Naval Defense Industry Cooperation signed on November 30, 2023



### **Canada**

MOU on Defense Cooperation signed on January 19, 2024

Sources: DFA and DND

245 DND, June 28, 2024.



The AFP, US INDOPACOM, Australian Defence Force, and Japan Self-Defense Forces successfully conduct the first Multilateral MCA in the WPS on April 07, 2024.

Photo Credit: AFP

**PH-US Exercise Balikatan.** It is an annual combined and joint exercise between the AFP and the US INDOPACOM that aims to enhance both forces' interoperability in the planning and execution of military operations. The 39<sup>th</sup> iteration of the *Balikatan* was held from April 22 to May 10, 2024.

Major events include command and control exercises, field training exercises, and humanitarian civic assistance.

### Keeping up with Emerging Threats<sup>246</sup>

Given the fast-paced technological advancements, we must keep up and protect our country from emerging threats such as those in the cyberspace. On April 04, 2024, we issued EO No. 58,<sup>247</sup> adopting the National Cybersecurity Plan (NCSP) 2023-2028 as the whole-of-nation roadmap for the integrated development and strategic direction of the country's cybersecurity.

The NCSP 2023-2028 encompasses the development of robust policies to ensure a secure cyber landscape, identify critical cyber assets requiring protection, and provide protocols for government agencies and sectors to effectively respond to cyber threats.



The AFP and the US Armed Forces successfully execute maritime strike exercises in Laoag, Ilocos Norte on May 08, 2024, as part of the Exercise *Balikatan* 39-2024.

Photo Credit: AFP

246 DICT, June 28, 2024.

247 Titled, "Adopting the NCSP 2023-2028, and Directing the Implementation Thereof."

# Way Forward

We aspire for a nation that is just, peaceful, and inclusive. Toward this aspiration, we recognize that stability and security are enablers of progress. Thus, as we promote a just society, we remain committed to efforts that will strengthen capability to prevent crimes and sustain the downtrend in the number of crime incidents, including illegal drug operations nationwide.

Our strategy shift in our fight against illegal drugs has borne fruit and we continue to improve our systems to sustain our gains. We are working to further streamline the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs to allow law enforcement authorities to focus on going after large scale drug syndicates.

We reaffirm our commitment to build a just and humane society by introducing justice reforms and improving the country's human rights situation. We promulgated our rules on preliminary investigations and inquest proceedings, which will complement the Supreme Court's Revised Rules on Criminal Procedure. Recognizing the need for collaborative efforts between the Executive and the Judiciary, we continue to decongest not only our jails and prisons but also our court dockets, and improve the living conditions of PDLs.

To strike a balance between protecting the country's borders and encouraging our friends and allies to travel to and invest in the Philippines, we likewise seek the passage of the amended Philippine Immigration Act.

On internal security, we are sustaining the momentum of our strategy against insurgency. The AFP aims to eliminate

the armed components of insurgency and local terrorism by the end of 2024.

We continue to complement our military approach with development solutions to address the root cause of insurgency. The BDP is an essential part of this strategy. We are determined to sustain the funding and implementation of the program. The government, through the NTF-ELCAC, has been working with the LGUs in delivering basic services and fostering development in vulnerable communities, preventing them from slipping back to communist influence.

Peace is within reach. We remain dedicated to the achievement of peace and progress in Mindanao. The national government is assisting our sisters and brothers in the Bangsamoro toward their pursuit of peace and prosperity.

Amid the challenges, the Filipinos have remained resilient. As we strengthen our territorial defense, we are continuing to promote peace and find pathways to resolve any issues that create tensions and threaten the safety of our people and the security of the country. We are continuing to defend our rights in accordance with international and national laws.

On maritime security, we are pursuing the enhancement of the capabilities of the PCG and the passage of the following legislation to further bolster the country's territorial integrity:

- PCG Modernization Act;
- Philippine Maritime Zones Bill; and
- Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act.

We are resolute to sustain our defense capability requirements as we push the revitalization of a national defense industry and improve the overall defense posture of the country through the passage of the Self-Reliant Defense Posture Revitalization Act.


We recognize the magnitude of cyber threats and the risk these pose to the country's security and peace and order. This is why our police and military are intensifying their respective capabilities for cybersecurity. We are working closely with the civil society, the private sector, and international partners in ensuring a trusted, secure, and resilient cyberspace for every Filipino.

Guided by the NCSP 2023-2028, the DICT and all concerned agencies must ensure proper and timely implementation of the plan toward the following: (i) development of a national cybersecurity threat database; (ii) partnerships with public telecommunication entities for early

detection and mitigation of cybersecurity threats; (iii) partnerships with digital online platforms to combat misinformation; and (iv) establishment of the national cybersecurity intelligence fusion center and national network of Computer Emergency Response Teams.

Likewise, the establishment of the NCTI is intended to improve the cyber leadership preparedness of our law enforcement units while also developing their skills to identify, detect, and respond to cyber threats. The NCTI's operationalization will be instrumental to create a secured digital environment and enhanced cybersecurity.

We are aware of the constant threats to society, security, and progress. However, we will not be shackled by fear. The national government, police, and the military are working hand in hand with the civil society and the public to ensure the integrity of the nation and a better future for the next generations.



The President salutes to the Philippine flag during the 82<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the *Araw ng Kagitingan* on April 09, 2024 in Bataan.

Photo Credit: PCO

The President speaks before the Filipino Community  
in Hawaii on November 19, 2023.

*Photo Credit: PCO*



# CHAPTER 06

# Advancing the National Interest Toward Peace and Prosperity

Peace is the driving force of our independent foreign policy. We have stood firm in our principles that support the common good, recognize the inviolability of freedom and human rights, and respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Global instability poses risks on the safety of Filipinos and adversely impacts socio-economic progress. However, cushioning its effects and sustaining our development trajectory will require not just a government that delivers, but a nation

united and strengthened by diversity. In these trying times, our collective resolve to overcome challenges will be vital to the posterity of the nation.

Guided by the pillars of our foreign policy, we sustained the momentum of our relations with friends and partners to foster peace and advance our security and development priorities. In engaging the world, we will continue to safeguard the well-being and aspirations of the Filipino.



The President sits down for an interview after delivering his keynote address at the Lowy Institute in Australia on March 04, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO



*We in the Philippines stand committed to promoting peace and prosperity in our region. We aspire to live peacefully with all our neighbors and continue to believe that the successes of all our regional partners contribute to our own success, as thus our success contribute to the region."*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
Lowy Institute, Australia  
March 04, 2024

# Fostering International Partnerships for Peace, Security, and Development

Recognizing the important role that the Philippines plays in promoting peace and development, and in championing the causes of developing countries, we reinvigorated our relations with long-standing partners and sought to forge new ones. In the past year, we successfully concluded at least 30 agreements to further expand our cooperation with various countries (see *Figure 6.1*).

## Forged Closer Ties in the Indo-Pacific<sup>248</sup>

**Viet Nam.** I undertook a State Visit to Viet Nam in January 2024 upon the invitation of the Vietnamese President. We agreed to further develop the Philippines-Viet Nam Strategic Partnership in a more comprehensive manner as we approach its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025. We also reaffirmed our mutual commitment to maintaining peace, stability, maritime security, and freedom of navigation and overflight in the SCS.

### Philippines-Viet Nam MOU on Maritime Cooperation



The MOU will create a Joint Coast Guard Committee to strengthen maritime cooperation and a hotline mechanism to ensure that unexpected incidents at sea will be solved amicably.

Source: DFA

**Malaysia.** Following the visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to the Philippines in March 2023, I accepted Malaysia's invitation to visit in July 2023.

During the visit, Prime Minister Anwar and I discussed the convening of the Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)<sup>249</sup> to deepen Philippines-Malaysia cooperation in areas of mutual interests such as addressing transnational crime and the development of the halal industry, Islamic banking, and digital economy.



### Investments secured from the President's Visit to Malaysia

**USD285 million**

worth of investments



multi-service  
digital  
platforms



aviation  
maintenance  
services



manufacturing



infrastructure

Sources: DFA and DTI



The President meets with Prime Minister Anwar during the President's State Visit to Malaysia on July 26, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

248 DFA, June 25, 2024.

249 Established in 1993, the Philippines-Malaysia JCM serves as a bilateral platform to discuss various areas of cooperation such as politico-security; economy; agriculture; tourism; education; health; information and communications; culture; hajj; air services; and consular matters. Seven JCMs have been held so far, the last of which was hosted in Manila in 2011. Malaysia is scheduled to host the 8<sup>th</sup> JCM.



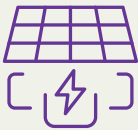
**Indonesia.** We also welcomed President Joko Widodo to the country in January 2024. As one of our closest friends and regional partners, his visit is a symbol of the enduring ties between the Philippines and Indonesia. Our discussions touched on border security, energy security, and peace and development, among others.



The President welcomes President Widodo during the latter's Official Visit to Manila on January 10, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

### Philippines-Indonesia MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Energy



The MOU aims to bolster energy cooperation between the two countries. The agreement discusses collaboration on energy transition, including coal supply, renewable energy, electric vehicles, and alternative fuels such as hydrogen and its derivatives (e.g., ammonia) and biofuels.

Source: DOE

**Brunei Darussalam.** In May 2024, I accepted the invitation of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah to visit their country to mark the 40 years of our bilateral relations. Sultan Bolkiah and I discussed various aspects of our relations, such as defense and security, maritime cooperation, economic cooperation, and people-to-people ties.



The President shakes hands with Sultan Bolkiah during the President's State Visit to Brunei Darussalam on May 28, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

I witnessed the signing of three MOUs between the Philippines and Brunei on tourism cooperation, on the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) for seafarers, and on maritime cooperation.

**Australia.** We welcomed Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to the Philippines in September 2023. The event marks the first bilateral visit of an Australian Prime Minister since 2003.

During his visit, we elevated our relations with Australia from a Comprehensive to a Strategic Partnership. Our partnership was expanded to include strategic collaboration in the areas of environment and climate change, people-to-people linkages, and development cooperation.

To further bolster our strategic cooperation, I accepted the invitation of Governor General David Hurley to visit Australia in February 2024. During my visit, we concluded MOUs that would enhance our cooperation in the areas of maritime security, cybersecurity, and trade.



The President speaks with Prime Minister Albanese before the President's Address to the Australian Parliament on February 29, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

### Philippines-Australia MOU on Cyber and Critical Technology



The MOU aims to enhance cooperation between the two countries in cyber affairs and critical technology. The MOU focuses on information sharing and exchange of best practices; capacity-building; and promotion of a secure digital economy and greater understanding of the application of international law and norms in cyberspace.

Source: DFA

In a historical first, I had the honor of delivering an address to the Australian Parliament at the invitation of Prime Minister Albanese to highlight our shared security challenges in the Indo-Pacific and thanked them for their continued support to the Philippines.

**Japan.** I invited Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for an Official Visit to the country in November 2023. During his visit, we reaffirmed our strategic partnership and committed to carry out

### Philippines-Japan Exchange of Notes on the Non-Project Grant Aid (NPGA) for BARMM



The NPGA, valued at JPY957 million or about PhP376 million, will be utilized for the acquisition of construction equipment for road network improvement and disaster quick response operation in the BARMM.

It will facilitate relief operations during calamities and disasters and mitigate the impact of flooding in the region.

Source: DFA

our current and planned initiatives across various sectors. I also expressed appreciation for Japan's support to our local development initiatives in Mindanao and our Build Better More program.

**New Zealand.** I invited New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon to undertake a bilateral visit to the country in April 2024, a first since 2017. In recognition of our closer partnership, we agreed to elevate the level of bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Partnership by 2026.

We discussed our countries' mutual interests and potential collaboration in the fields of climate change, tourism, maritime cooperation, and addressing transnational organized crime, among others.



The President, President Joe Biden, and Prime Minister Kishida meet during the Trilateral Leaders' Summit in the US on April 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

**Philippines-US-Japan Trilateral Leaders' Summit.** In April 2024, I met with US President Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida in a historic trilateral summit to further synergize our existing wide-ranging cooperation. We reaffirmed our commitment to a peaceful, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, guided by shared values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and gender equality.

We were able to secure support for our flagship infrastructure development and connectivity projects, through the launch of the LEC and collaboration on Open Radio Access Network trials in the country. We benefited from funding and assistance for workforce development for the semiconductor industry and capacity-building on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, among others.<sup>250</sup>

### Fostered Relations with Like-minded Partners<sup>251</sup>

Under a *Bagong Pilipinas*, we aspire to bring about transformative change for our Filipino brethren. This transformation will not be achieved in isolation. To this end, we sought to foster existing

relations, and built new partnerships with like-minded states around the world.

**EU.** We welcomed European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to the country in July 2023. Her visit marks the first time a Commission President officially visited the Philippines in almost 60 years, signaling a “new era” of cooperation between the Philippines and the regional bloc.

During her visit, we discussed revitalizing our trade with the EU, hoping to conclude the Philippines-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the coming years.<sup>252</sup> The resumption of the FTA negotiations is set to start in the fourth quarter of 2024.

On March 31, 2023, we welcomed the Commission's decision to extend its recognition of the Philippines' maritime education, training, and certification of seafarers in line with the STCW Convention. This positive recognition from the EU of the Philippines' continuing efforts to improve its compliance with the convention has spared the livelihoods of our more than 50,000 Filipino seafarers aboard EU-flagged vessels.

We also forged an ambitious agreement with the EU in space cooperation, the Copernicus Capacity Support Action Programme for the Philippines, as well as the GEPP. Both were launched in 2023 to further capacitate our national and local government units in the important areas of Earth observation applications and green transition that are essential to bringing our country to a prosperous future.

250 DTI, June 26, 2024.

251 DFA, June 25, 2024.

252 DTI, June 26, 2024.

### Philippines-EU Joint Declaration on the GEPP



The Programme pledges EUR60 million worth of grant to assist the Philippines in its transition to a green economy, particularly in initiatives on circular economy, renewable energy, and climate change mitigation.

Source: DFA

### Renewal of Cooperation Programme between the TESDA and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education



Signed in March 2024, the agreement seeks to strengthen technical vocational education and training by implementing capacity building measures for workers.

### Solutions for Marine and Coastal Resilience in the Coral Triangle and Training of Germany



Signed in December 2023, the German-implemented project allots EUR20 million for climate protection, conservation, and sustainable management of fisheries and biodiversity in the Coral Triangle Initiative member states, including the Philippines.

Source: DFA



Chancellor Olaf Scholz welcomes the President to the Federal Chancellery during the President's Working Visit to Germany on March 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

**Germany.** As we continue to strengthen relations with our like-minded friends far and wide, we accepted the invitation of German Chancellor Scholz to visit Germany in March 2024.

Chancellor Scholz and I discussed areas for enhanced cooperation such as trade and investments, critical raw materials and renewable energy, climate change, climate protection, and worker upskilling. We reaffirmed our mutual commitment to promoting a rules-based international order beyond our own regions to contribute to the broader global economy.

**Czech Republic.** We also went to the Czech Republic at the invitation of President Petr Pavel, almost a year after the visit of Prime Minister Petr Fiala to Manila in April 2023. I met with Czech leaders and exchanged views on regional and international issues.

We discussed cooperation between our states in the areas of defense, space and aerospace, labor, climate change, and tourism.



The President meets with President Pavel during the President's State Visit to the Czech Republic on March 14, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO



Qatar Amir His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani meets with the President during the former's State Visit to the Philippines on April 22, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

**Qatar.** In April 2024, Qatar Amir Al Thani visited the Philippines. Our discussions covered energy security, trade and investments, and regional security. We also enhanced our cooperation through the conclusion of MOUs on youth, sports, combatting human trafficking, and technical cooperation and capacity building on climate change.

**Ukraine.** On June 03, 2024, I met with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Manila. During the visit, I reiterated our continued support to diplomatic efforts in finding a peaceful solution to the Ukraine-Russia war. President Zelenskyy expressed appreciation for the Philippines' political, multilateral, and humanitarian support to Ukraine, and confirmed Ukraine's plan to open an Embassy in Manila in 2024.



President Zelenskyy meets with the President during the former's unofficial visit to the Philippines on June 03, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

## Pursued Multilateralism to Address Regional and Global Concerns<sup>253</sup>

We envision a Philippines that is a credible member and a reliable partner of the international community. To this end, we actively took part in multilateral fora to discuss and formulate effective solutions to mutual concerns.

**ASEAN.** We continued to participate in the ASEAN Summit and Related Meetings held from September 05 to 07, 2023. I reiterated our support for ASEAN centrality and a rules-based international order and multilateral trading system and encouraged the ASEAN to call on developed countries to fulfill their climate action commitments.

I also reaffirmed the Philippines' commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes in the SCS in accordance with international law. I reiterated that we are committed to defending our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and maritime jurisdiction in accordance with the 1982 UNCLOS.

On September 05, 2023, I announced our readiness to Chair the ASEAN in 2026 to ensure that ASEAN community-building efforts remain unimpeded. Following this announcement, I instructed the creation of a National Organizing Council to begin the preparatory work for this landmark event.<sup>254</sup>

On the sidelines of my participation in the ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in October 2023, I met with the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

253 DFA, June 25, 2024; and DTI, June 26, 2024.

254 AO No. 17, s. 2024, titled, "Constituting the National Organizing Council for the Philippine Hosting of the ASEAN Summit Meetings in 2026, Defining its Mandates, Powers and Functions, and for Other Purposes."

We discussed furthering trade and investment relations, enhancing people-to-people ties, and exploring cooperation in food security.

In December 2023, we were able to secure USD263 million worth of investment pledges on the sidelines of our participation in the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit. I also witnessed the signing of two agreements between the Philippines and Japan: the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between the PCG and the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) as well as the MOC on environmental protection.

During my most recent participation in the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit in March 2024, we were able to secure business agreements worth USD1.53 billion. These agreements cover wide-ranging areas such as renewable energy, digital health services, and housing.

**Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).** In November 2023, I participated in the APEC Economic Leaders' Week in San Francisco, California where I highlighted the Philippines' journey toward sustainable and inclusive trade and investment liberalization, adoption of clean and renewable technologies, and supply chain connectivity for our MSMEs through digitalization and innovation.

I also took the opportunity to advocate for the immediate and coordinated action on environmental issues, a just energy transition, and the empowerment of informal economic actors with untapped potential to participate in the global economy.

**Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).**<sup>255</sup> Approximately two years after the launch of the IPEF in Tokyo, Japan, the IPEF partners<sup>256</sup> announced significant new developments related to the IPEF Supply Chain Agreement (Pillar II), the Clean Economy Agreement (Pillar III), and the Fair Economy Agreement (Pillar IV), as well as the overarching Agreement on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, during the IPEF Ministerial meeting hosted by Singapore on June 06, 2024.



### Key Agreements related to the IPEF Pillars II, III, and IV



#### Pillar II Supply Chain Agreement

- Share information and best practices on supply chain opportunities and vulnerabilities
- Facilitate business matching and investments to strengthen supply chains
- Create crisis response capabilities for supply chain disruptions
- Promote labor rights and workforce development across IPEF supply chains



#### Pillar III Clean Economy Agreement

- Accelerate deployment of clean technologies and facilitate investments



#### Pillar IV Fair Economy Agreement

- Improve transparency and predictability in business environment
- Enhance efforts to prevent and combat corruption, including bribery, and improve transparency and the exchange of information, domestic resource mobilization, and tax administration

255 DTI, June 26, 2024.

256 Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, the US, and Viet Nam.

**Figure 6.1 Key Deliverables during the President's Engagements with Foreign Leaders**  
(July 2023 to May 2024)

EU		Joint Declaration on the GEPP
Australia		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership between the Republic of the Philippines and the Commonwealth of Australia</li> <li>• MOU on a Work and Holiday Visa Arrangement</li> <li>• MOU on Cooperation on National Soil Health Strategy</li> <li>• MOU on Enhanced Maritime Cooperation</li> <li>• MOU on Cyber and Critical Technology Cooperation</li> <li>• MOU on Cooperation between the Philippine Competition Commission and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission on Implementation of Competition Law</li> </ul>
Japan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOC in the Field of Tourism</li> <li>• MOC on Mining Sector</li> <li>• Exchange of Notes for the Official Security Assistance for the Philippines</li> <li>• Exchange of Notes on NPGA for the BARMM</li> <li>• MOC between the PCG and JCG</li> <li>• Appendix (to MOC) Standard Operating Procedure for Information Sharing in Maritime Domain Awareness between the PCG and JCG</li> <li>• MOC in the Field of Environmental Protection</li> </ul>
Indonesia		MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Energy
Viet Nam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU on Rice Trade</li> <li>• MOU on Agriculture and Related Fields</li> <li>• MOU on Maritime Cooperation</li> <li>• Understanding on Incident Prevention and Management in the SCS</li> <li>• Cultural Cooperation Program</li> </ul>
Germany		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint Declaration of Intent on Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Sector</li> <li>• Renewal of the Cooperation Programme between the TESDA and the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training</li> </ul>
Czech Republic		Joint Communiqué on Labor Consultations Mechanism
Qatar		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Sports</li> <li>• MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Youth</li> <li>• MOU on Cooperation in Combatting Human Trafficking</li> <li>• MOU on Technical Cooperation and Capacity Building on Climate Change</li> <li>• MOU in the Fields of Tourism and Business Events</li> <li>• MOU on Mutual Recognition of Seafarers' Certificates</li> </ul>
Brunei Darussalam		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOU on Tourism Cooperation</li> <li>• MOU on Mutual Recognition of STCW Certificates</li> <li>• MOU on Maritime Cooperation</li> </ul>

Source: DFA



The President speaks at the 21<sup>st</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies-Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on May 31, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

## Reiterated our Security Posture in the International Arena<sup>257</sup>

In the WPS, we continue to assert our sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction anchored on the UNCLOS and the July 2016 Arbitral Award on the SCS. We continue to pursue cooperation, peace, and stability in the region, but not at the expense of our national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We maintained productive maritime engagements with our partners to promote compliance with the 2016 Arbitral Award and international law. In 2023, we held maritime dialogues with the United Kingdom, Australia, the US, EU, and the Republic of Korea (ROK). In July 2023, we launched the website “Not One Inch” to serve as the central resource for the Philippine position on the 2016 Arbitral Award.

I appreciate the consistent expressions of support from our allies, partners, and friends in the international community in the face of continued illegal, aggressive, and dangerous acts against us by external actors in the region.

Again, we seek no conflict with any nation. But we, Filipinos, do not yield.

## Strengthened Trade Relations<sup>258</sup>

We continue to drive our development agenda in the international stage through economic diplomacy aimed at spurring renewed business interests in the country as a reliable trade partner and preferred investment destination.

### Signed the Philippines-ROK FTA.

In September 2023, I and ROK President Yoon Suk Yeol witnessed the signing of the PH-ROK FTA at the sidelines of the 43<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in Indonesia. The FTA is a positive development for the deepening economic relations between our two countries.



### Primary Benefiting Sectors and Products from the PH-ROK FTA



Critical Minerals Processing

### Agricultural Exports to ROK



Fresh Guavas



Fresh Bananas



Fresh Papayas



Fresh Blue Crabs



Processed Pineapples



Pineapple Juice



Prepared Oysters



Canned Sardines



Yellowfin Tuna



Fresh Tilapia

257 DFA, June 25, 2024.

258 DTI, June 26, 2024.





The President and President Yoon witness the signing of the PH-ROK FTA at the sidelines of the 43<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN Summit in Indonesia on September 07, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

The FTA is expected to eliminate significant tariffs for certain agricultural exports and complement ongoing efforts to develop the local critical minerals processing industry. I look forward to the complete ratification of the agreement in both countries and its eventual implementation.

### **Continued economic engagements.**

A crucial aspect of my visits abroad is our engagements with international business communities to help us achieve our development priorities.

In my addresses, I highlighted our post-COVID-19 recovery, business-friendly policies, and very capable and hardworking talent pool, among others. We also highlighted the potential opportunities in the country through the MIF.

Through these efforts, we were able to secure an additional USD8.05 billion of investment leads from the trips for the period of July 2023 to May 2024 (see Figure 6.2).

Since the beginning of my Administration, we were able to obtain about USD69.61 billion worth of investment leads from our landmark official and working visits.

We continue to look for new avenues of cooperation to maximize the potential of our partnerships. We are also negotiating trade agreements with our partners to further business and trade opportunities while ensuring that these will redound to the country's economic transformation.



The President participates in the Philippines-US Business Forum during his Working Visit to the US on April 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

Figure 6.2 **Investment Leads secured from the President's Foreign Trips**  
(July 2022 to May 2024)



From July 2022 to June 2023

**USD61.56 billion\***

estimated investment leads were secured resulting in



**195,120**

jobs to be created



From July 2023 to May 2024

**USD8.05 billion**

estimated investment leads were secured resulting in



**29,615**

jobs to be created

**TOTAL**



**USD69.61 billion**

estimated investment leads



**224,735**

jobs to be created

**Investment Areas**



Manufacturing



Renewable Energy



Telecommunications



Agriculture



IT-Business Process Management

\* Adjusted figures based on actual amount from registered projects.

Source: DTI



The President underscores the Philippines' commitments at the IPBF on May 21, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

**Presidential Trade and Investment Mission (PTIM).**

As a result of my visit to the US in May 2023, US President Biden sent a high-level business delegation to the Philippines in March 2024. The PTIM announced USD1 billion worth of investment commitments focused on solar panel manufacturing, air logistics, tourism, digital infrastructure, digital and cybersecurity training, and worker upskilling programs.

We agreed on strengthening commercial relationships and establishing resilient supply chains for semiconductors and critical minerals promoting more US investments in these sectors.

**Indo-Pacific Business Forum (IPBF).**

In May 2024, we co-hosted this event with the US Trade and Development Agency and the US Department of State. It aimed to identify opportunities to strengthen US cooperation with the Indo-Pacific economies on infrastructure development including clean energy, smart cities, critical minerals and supply chain resilience, intelligent transportation systems, and cybersecurity.

It convened government and private sector leaders from the US and across the Indo-Pacific region to build partnerships and share insights on the latest trends, opportunities, and solutions to support infrastructure in the region's emerging economies.

# Promoting the Welfare and Interests of Overseas Filipinos



The President meets with the Filipino community during his State Visit to Brunei Darussalam on May 28, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

The third pillar of Philippine foreign policy is the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare and interests of Filipinos overseas. Consistent with this policy, the safety of Filipinos, no matter where they are, is a national priority.

In the past year, we have seen intensified global conflicts, posing danger to Filipino workers. To ensure their safety, we pursued agreements with other countries and institutionalized mechanisms to immediately respond to their needs.

## Protected Workers' Opportunities and Rights

We took a strong position in promoting the welfare of Filipino workers and guaranteed them a safe working environment where their rights are protected.

## **Strengthened Bilateral Labor Agreements (BLAs) for healthcare workers.**<sup>259</sup>

With the broad aim of strengthening BLAs that are beneficial for all healthcare workers, we were able to uphold provisions in the BLAs that would balance overseas employment opportunities and the impact of "brain drain."

These provisions encourage host countries to provide scholarship grants, faculty development programs, and training to deserving students and faculties from GIDAs. These include the promotion of Adopt-A-School and Adopt-A-Hospital programs and scholarships to meet the needs of other countries for human resources in the field of health. These initiatives would also increase the number of practicing healthcare professionals (e.g., nurses, medical technologists, pharmacists) in the Philippines.

259 DFA, June 25, 2024; and Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), June 27, 2024.



## Institutional provisions considered in bilateral agreements



Dispute resolution



Protection of human rights and dignity of migrant workers



Faculty development



Social security coverage



Observance of fair and ethical recruitment process



Programs that aid in the reintegration of workers



Grant of scholarships



Financial support for workers undergoing credentials



Certification and skills qualification



Conduct of training and seminars



Combatting irregular migration and human trafficking



Modernizing facilities in the Philippines

Further, we established a return of service policy to ensure the scholars' commitment to serve the country prior to their overseas deployment.

On July 07, 2023, we concluded the MOU between the DMW and the Federal State of Vienna and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber on the Recruitment of Filipino Nurses. Ratified on February 20, 2024, the agreement aims to enhance the relations of the Philippines and Austria on migration, employment, and integration of registered Filipino nurses.

This also recognizes that registered nurses recruited for employment in public and private healthcare facilities and long-term care in Vienna, Austria have an equal opportunity to improve their skills and explore best practices in the field of healthcare while rendering support to the local health system and addressing labor shortages in Austria.

We are currently negotiating agreements on healthcare with Manitoba and Saskatchewan in Canada, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).



Officials from the DFA, DMW, the Federal State of Vienna, and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber conclude the signing of the MOA on the Recruitment of Filipino Nurses in Vienna, Austria on July 07, 2023.

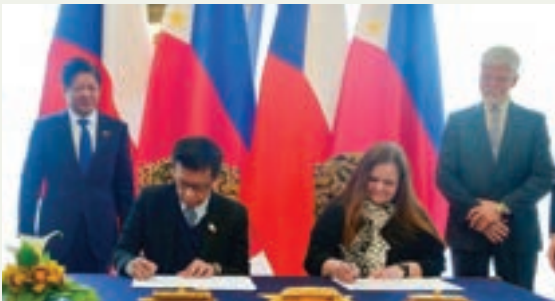
*Photo Credit: DMW*

In our negotiations, we are ensuring the inclusion of critical provisions that will safeguard the rights and welfare of our migrant workers.

Given the growing demand for Filipino workers abroad, there is a need for an orderly deployment, which outlines their rights and responsibilities while in the host countries. This will guarantee that the process of recruitment is implemented in a fair and ethical manner, and that our Filipino workers are treated fairly.

### Box 6.1 Philippines-Czech Republic Joint Communiqué on Labor Consultations Mechanism

- The mechanism establishes a system for discussing areas of mutual interests, including proper procedure in employing Filipino citizens in the Central European country.
- This led to the increase in the annual quota for Filipino workers in the Czech Republic from 5,000 in January 2024 to 10,300 beginning May 2024.



The President and President Pavel witness the signing of the Joint Communiqué on Labor Consultations Mechanism during the President’s State Visit to the Czech Republic on March 14, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

Source: DMW

As we strengthen our labor partnerships with other countries, we vow to continue recognizing their accomplishments and implementing programs that will protect their rights, promote their welfare, and ensure their safety wherever they are.

#### **Empowered Filipino seafarers.**<sup>260</sup>

We recognize the dedication of our seafarers in rendering top-notch service internationally. Their accomplishments

and services largely contribute to the Philippines’ economic progress. Remittances from seafarers increased by 1.08% in January to March 2024 compared to the same period in 2023 (see Figure 6.3). Further, in 2023, we saw the deployment of Filipino seafarers reach an all-time high of 578,626.

In May 2024, we were confirmed anew in the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) “White List.” The list functions as a record of countries honored for their dedication to upholding high standards in seafarer certification, education, and training. This signifies that the seafarers trained and certified in the Philippines meet the rigorous international standards set forth by the IMO International Convention on STCW.

In line with fulfilling the requirements of the shipping industry by 2050, we identified strategies to ensure the deployment readiness of Filipino seafarers. We updated the training course on Basic and Advanced Training for Service on Ships subject to the International Code of Safety for Ships using Gases or Low-flashpoint Fuels Code.

Figure 6.3 Remittances from Sea-based Workers



Source: DOTr-MARINA

260 DMW, June 27, 2024; and DOTr-Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), June 24, 2024.



A Filipino seafarer works on a ship in the middle of the Taiwan Strait.

Photo Credit: DOTr-MARINA

In April 2024, the MARINA completed the development of instructional materials and assessment tools of the course. The course will be offered to seafarers upon accreditation and approval by the MARINA.

As we meet the increasing global demand for seafarers, we will not only improve the quality of training and education in the country, but also ensure their safety and well-being.

### Assisted Filipinos in Distress<sup>261</sup>

Despite our endeavors to provide OFWs with the assistance they need, many still experience distress due to conflict, abuse and exploitation, and man-made or natural crises. Thus, this Administration continued to reinforce stronger protection, growth, and development for them and for their families in times of emergencies.

Since August 2023, we have been mobilizing PhP2.8 billion worth of assistance through the *Agarang Kalinga at Saklolo para sa mga OFW na Nangangailangan* or AKSYON Fund to distressed OFWs during global crises and emergencies (see *Figure 6.4*).

In addition to financial support, we made every effort to promptly assist our returning OFWs by providing them travel and airport assistance for safe passage to exit points, welcome kits, domestic transportation and temporary accommodation, psychosocial and post-trauma counseling, medical check-up and consultation, and scholarship vouchers for them and their dependents.

This Administration has never once taken a moment to cease in exhausting all possible ways within its power to respond to the needs and prioritize the welfare of our OFWs. We established the One Repatriation Command Center (ORCC) as a way to keep communication lines open with our migrant workers.

From July 22, 2022 to June 15, 2024, we received 32,548 requests for assistance through the ORCC. Of this number, 24,979 or 76% have been resolved.

A monthly average of 896 OFWs or a total of 20,608 OFWs have been safely repatriated and reunited with their families in the Philippines and 3,109 requests for better working terms were addressed.

### **Facilitated the repatriation of OFWs.**

With the ongoing global conflicts and unforeseen calamities, we made sure that the government will always be there during our OFWs' hour of need. As of May 31, 2024, we successfully repatriated 928 OFWs from Israel, Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza who were affected by the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. We also facilitated the repatriation of 32 OFW dependents from these areas.

261 DMW, June 27, 2024.

Figure 6.4 **Assistance Provided to Filipinos in Distress**  
(August 01, 2023 to April 30, 2024)

#### Mass layoff of employees of ELE Ltd. in New Zealand



Provided financial assistance amounting to **USD600** each to **306** affected OFWs



Provided legal assistance to affected OFWs

#### Magnitude 7.4 earthquake in Taiwan



Provided immediate relief assistance to **856** OFWs



Provided financial assistance worth **PhP30,000** each to injured OFWs

#### UAE floods



Provided immediate relief assistance and food packs to **356** OFWs



Extended cash assistance of **PhP50,000** each to the next-of-kin of three OFWs who died during the flood



Provided cash assistance of **PhP10,000** each to **106** OFW flood victims

#### Other financial assistance to returning OFWs



**PhP50,000**  
from DMW and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA)



**PhP20,000**  
from DSWD



**PhP5,000**  
from TESDA

Source: DMW



An ORCC personnel attends to an OFW in need of assistance.

Photo Credit: DMW

We ensured that our OFWs were assisted in every step of the repatriation process (see Figure 6.5).

Further, we were able to assist 803 overseas Filipinos and their dependents who were repatriated to the Philippines after being displaced due to the conflict in Sudan. Of the 803 arrivals, 582 were OFWs.

From July 2023 to May 2024, through the OWWA, 9,321 returning OFWs, including repatriates from Kuwait, Israel, the KSA, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, and the UAE, were supported with repatriation assistance and services. These services include airport assistance, medical aid, temporary shelter, and repatriation of human remains.



The President meets with the Filipino survivors from Israel at the Malacañang Park on December 22, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO

Figure 6.5 Assistance to OFWs Affected by the Israel-Hamas Conflict  
(as of May 31, 2024)



**PhP23,341,231.94**  
Airfare



**PhP7,722,887.65**  
Legal service for benefits claims



**PhP734,607.90**  
Repatriation cost  
of two human remains



**PhP980,642.78**  
Other related expenses  
and supplies



**PhP2,007,492.39**  
Food assistance



**PhP10,657,465.38**  
Special financial assistance



**PhP1,174,436.86**  
Hotel accommodation



**PhP305,855.69**  
Temporary shelter for evacuees



**PhP2,147,394.79**  
Transportation expenses

**PhP49,072,015.38\***

Total amount of assistance provided

\*Figures may not add up due to rounding.

Source: OWWA

## Box 6.2 Filipino crew members affected by Houthi attacks



A DMW personnel interviews a Filipino crew member of MV True Confidence who arrived with 10 others at the NAIA Terminal 3 on March 12, 2024.

Photo Credit: DMW

Being true modern-day heroes, some of our seafarers bravely risk their lives everyday into the deepest and most dangerous seas to provide for their families.

On November 19, 2023, the Bahamas-flagged vessel, MV Galaxy Leader, was hijacked by Yemeni Houthi rebels with 17 Filipino seafarers on board. We ensured that their next-of-kin were provided with full allotment from the manning agency, psychosocial support from the DMW's partner, *Ugnayan at Tulong para sa Maralitang Pamilya* Foundation Inc., and medical assistance through the DOH. We are currently exploring diplomatic solutions to bring our Filipino seafarers safely back to the Philippines.

Despite the dangers, we assured our Filipino seafarers that we will not rest until we secure their release and successfully bring them back home.

Further, on March 07, 2024, Houthi rebels launched a missile attack on a Barbados-flagged vessel, MV True Confidence with 15 Filipino seafarers on board. Unfortunately, the attack resulted in the death of two Filipino seafarers. Nonetheless, we were able to repatriate the surviving 13 Filipinos who are now undergoing post-traumatic stress counseling and treatment. They were provided with financial assistance of PhP50,000 each. Meanwhile, the remains of the two seafarers were repatriated on July 02, 2024. We will continue to provide the bereaved families with the necessary assistance and handhold them as they go through this difficult ordeal.

Source: DMW





The children of OFWs from Abu Dhabi, UAE arrive at the NAIA Terminal 1 in June 2024 to reunite with their families in the Philippines.

Photo Credit: DMW

**Assisted children of OFWs in need of special protection.** Apart from providing direct and welfare services to OFWs, the DMW also facilitated the safe repatriation of 113 children of OFWs from the Middle East since July 2023. These minors were either born out of wedlock, orphaned abroad, or abandoned by their OFW parents who absconded from their employers.

The DMW secured the children's birth registration documents, travel documents, and exit visas, and covered the children's levies and immigration penalties to enable them to finally be brought home to the Philippines. Upon arrival, the children were reunited with their parents' families.

**Intensified the implementation of Anti-Illegal Recruitment and Trafficking-In-Persons (AIR-TIP) Campaign.**<sup>262</sup>

I am deeply concerned by the increasing number of illegal recruitment and trafficking victims. The modus operandi of illegal recruiters and traffickers has become much more sophisticated. As a result, many of our Filipino workers fall prey to an online network of scammers who

lured them with high-paying job offers overseas, only to be trafficked and abused as workers of forced labor.

We are relentlessly pursuing these criminals to bring them to justice. Through our intensified operations, we rescued 52 victims of TIP overseas from 2023 to May 31, 2024 and assisted them in filing cases. We also cracked down on illegal recruiters by shutting down their establishments and filing charges against them (see *Figure 6.6*).

On the prevention side, we strengthened our AIR-TIP program to help protect our Filipino workers from fraudulent activities. As of May 31, 2024, we exceeded our targeted AIR-TIP partnerships by 173% with 52 stakeholders evaluated and approved. Thirty sessions of the AIR-TIP Seminar and Capability Enhancement Training were conducted, benefiting 6,518 participants.

**Figure 6.6 AIR-TIP Accomplishments**  
(January 01, 2023 to May 31, 2024)



**28,269** individuals provided with legal assistance



**290** surveillance operations conducted



**198** illegal recruitment cases handled



**20** individuals convicted of illegal recruitment



**15** establishments closed due to illegal recruitment

Source: DMW

262 DMW, June 27, 2024.

Through the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking-Tahanan ng Inyong Pag-asa (IACAT-TIP) Center,<sup>263</sup> we provided services to 366 victims of trafficking from January 01, 2023 to March 31, 2024. Of this number, 96 foreign nationals<sup>264</sup> were rescued from different illegal online scam operations under the pretext of a registered Internet Gaming Licensee. Out of the 366 rescued victims, 54.1% were female, while 21.58% were minors (see Figure 6.7).<sup>265</sup>

Additionally, the NBI conducted 45 anti-TIP operations in 2023, of which 22 were traditional TIP cases,<sup>266</sup> five were labor trafficking cases,<sup>267</sup> one was for child trafficking, and the other was a case of organ trafficking. Since January 01, 2024, 14 anti-TIP operations have been conducted, resulting in the rescue of 75 victims, of whom 22 and 53 were Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and TIP victims, respectively (see Figure 6.8).<sup>268</sup>

**Addressing the unpaid salaries of OFWs in the KSA.** We continued to negotiate with our KSA counterparts to ensure that our OFWs would receive fair compensation. In January 2024, the Alinma Bank commenced the issuance of checks to 12,000 distressed workers.

As of May 15, 2024, 1,350 checks intended for claimants were credited to the LBP amounting to PhP1.03 billion. Of this amount, PhP29.8 million worth of checks were endorsed to the LBP for 28 family beneficiaries of deceased OFW claimants.

Figure 6.7 Profile of IACAT-TIP Center Rescued Trafficking Victims (January 01, 2023 to March 31, 2024)

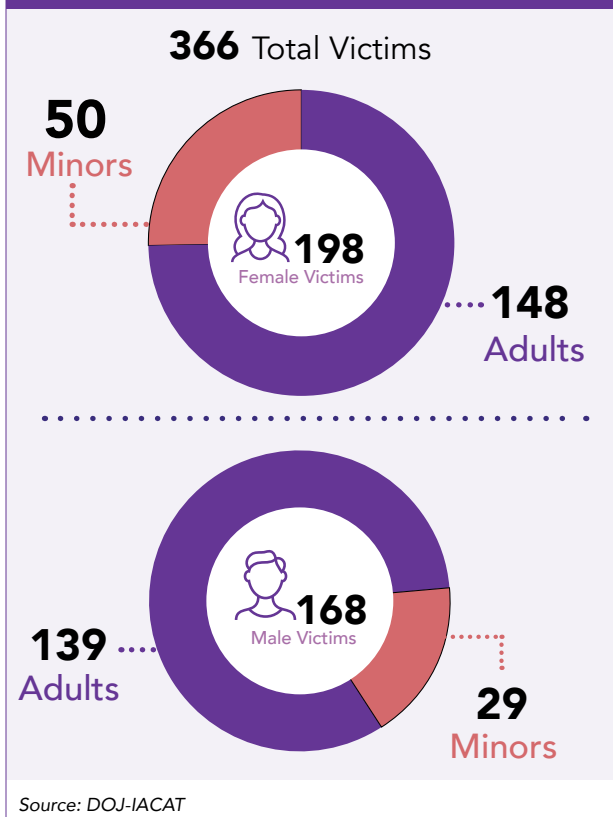
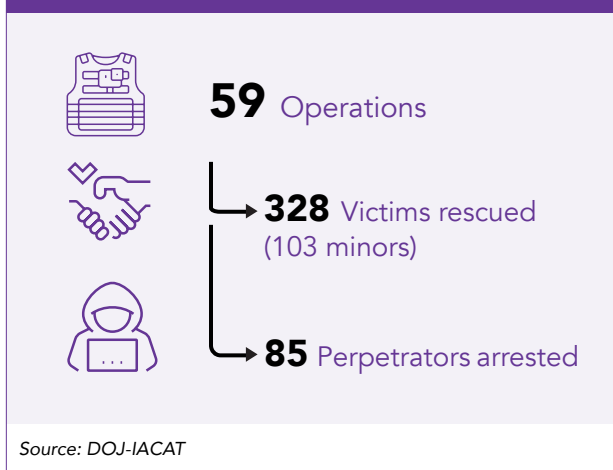


Figure 6.8 NBI Anti-OSAEC and Anti-TIP Operations (January 01, 2023 to May 09, 2024)



263 A government one-stop-shop that caters to victims of human trafficking.

264 42 Vietnamese, 34 Chinese, 15 Indonesians, four Nepalese, and one Burmese.

265 DOJ, June 26, 2024.

266 Refer to cases involving individuals vulnerable to illegal recruitment and trafficking (e.g., undergraduates, unemployed individuals).

267 Refer to cases involving highly educated individuals and those applying for customer representative service jobs in the Philippines.

268 DOJ, June 26, 2024.

Meanwhile, PhP34.7 million worth of checks were endorsed to the LBP for 30 family beneficiaries of OFW-payees with name discrepancies.

### Ensured a “Home” for OFWs<sup>269</sup>

To ease the burden of our OFWs and show our appreciation for their hard work, we built safe spaces for them where their comfort and convenience are prioritized.



OFWs stay at the OFW lounge located at the NAIA Terminal 1 before boarding their flight.

Photo Credit: OWWA

### Established the OFW lounges.

On January 12, 2024, we started the operation of the OFW Lounge at the NAIA Terminal 1 to accommodate our OFWs so they could have a comfortable place to stay before departing. The OFW lounge is located at the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Terminal 1, adjacent to the pre-departure area.

Catering exclusively to 2,000 departing OFW passengers 24/7, the OFW lounges offer a well air-conditioned and comfortable waiting area where they can relax, rest, get refreshments, and access various services before boarding their flight, similar to exclusive private

airport lounges, free of charge. As of May 31, 2024, the OFW lounges served 126,140 OFW passengers.



The Seafarers' Hub is located in Malate, Manila.

Photo Credit: OWWA

### Commenced the construction of the Seafarers' Hub.

The Seafarers' Hub is a 380-square meter specialized information and social hub located in Malate, Manila. It will provide a comfortable reception, information and service lounge exclusively to seafarers.

Seafarers can avail themselves of the OWWA-branded Migrant's Brew coffees and snacks, internet access, charging stations, board games, infotainment activities, comfortable lounges, and information, education and communication materials.

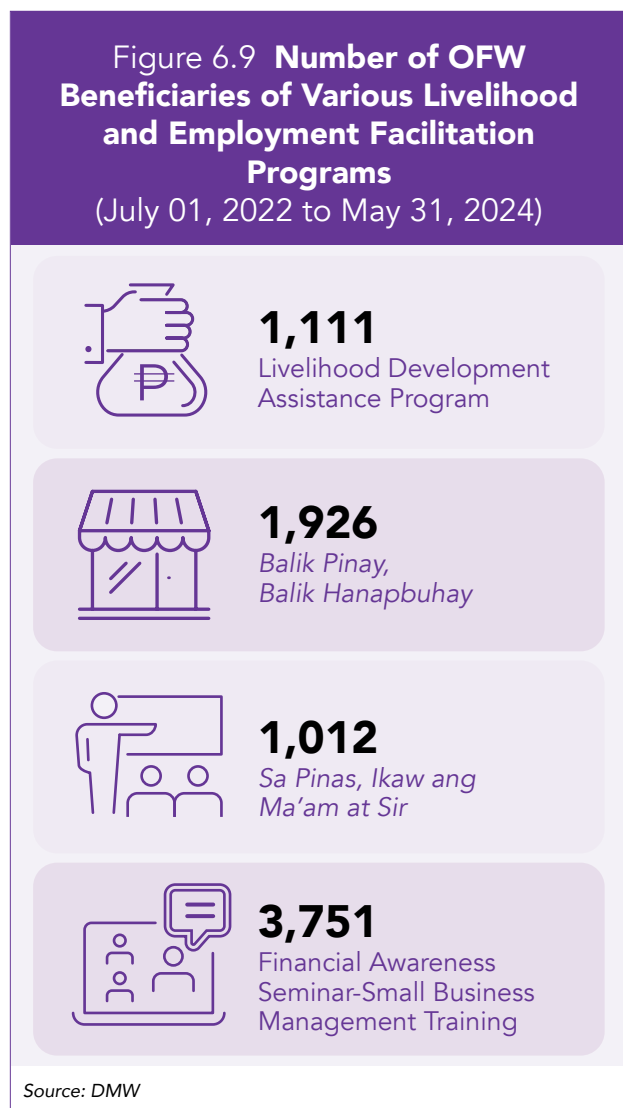
Further, a legal counseling room is also available in the hub to provide free legal services to seafarers. It also provides an information and help desk, family support services, and a training area.

269 DMW, June 27, 2024.

## Strengthened the National Reintegration Program<sup>270</sup>

We are putting in place responsive mechanisms for the reintegration of our returning OFWs into the Philippine economy.

The National Reintegration Program is now being fully implemented, in line with the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to facilitate the safe return and sustainable reintegration of OFWs. As of May 2024, 7,800 OFWs have benefited under its various programs (see *Figure 6.9*).



Through the DTI, DOST, and partner civil society organizations, 361 OFWs and their families were provided with entrepreneurship opportunities. In addition, we assisted 338 OFWs and their families with reskilling and upskilling through partnerships with academic institutions and the private sector. Consequently, 3,950 OFWs obtained skills certification and micro-credentialing from the TESDA.

Through the On-the-spot Reintegration Intervention for OFWs and Next-of-kin project, we extended our airport assistance to 1,128 OFW repatriates from Israel, Sudan, and Kuwait.

Further, we provided reintegration assistance (e.g., reintegration awareness and capacity development) to 7,948 OFWs and their families through a partnership with the Quezon City Migrants Resource Center.

In addition, several MOAs and MOUs for the development and implementation of programs to support reintegration (e.g., *Balik Bayani sa Turismo* program, *Pinansyal na Talino at Kaalaman* campaign, and *Gabay Dunong Para sa OFWs* program) had been signed to boost opportunities for the OFWs.

With the DMW's initiative to collaborate with other government agencies and the private sector, we were able to forge local agreements on various reintegration programs for our OFWs (see *Figure 6.10*).

270 DMW, June 27, 2024.

Figure 6.10 **DMW-Initiated and Forged Agreements with Various Entities on Reintegration Programs for OFWs**  
(October 2023 to March 2024)

 <p><b>Securities and Exchange Commission</b> PHILIPPINES</p> <p>SEC</p>	<p>MOU signed on October 11, 2023</p>	<p>Facilitates collaboration in the development, production, implementation, and promotion of information, education, and communication materials that highlight topics on the fundamentals of investing, financial literacy, investor protection, and investment scams.</p>
 <p><b>DepED</b> DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</p> <p>DepEd-Schools Division XI in Panabo City, Davao del Norte</p>	<p>MOA signed on November 15, 2023</p>	<p>Facilitates the implementation of the ALS <i>Gabay Dunong Para sa OFWs</i>, which is a non-formal education program that provides an alternative means for OFWs to complete basic education.</p>
 <p>DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM PHILIPPINES</p> <p>DOT</p>	<p>MOU signed on January 18, 2024</p>	<p>Formally launched the <i>Balik Bayani sa Turismo</i> program, which aims to expand business opportunities for OFWs and their families in tourism, retail business, farm tourism, homestay operations, and tour guiding, among others.</p>
 <p><b>PLDT</b> Global</p> <p>PLDT Global Inc.</p>	<p>MOA signed on February 26, 2024</p>	<p>Facilitates the joint implementation of various programs and projects that are relevant to the OFWs' needs (e.g., knowledge training, seminars, and upskilling activities).</p>
 <p><b>PSE</b></p> <p>Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc.</p>	<p>MOA signed on February 29, 2024</p>	<p>Facilitates collaboration in financial literacy initiatives for OFWs.</p>
 <p><b>Overseas Filipino Bank</b></p> <p>Overseas Filipino Bank</p>	<p>MOA signed on March 01, 2024</p>	<p>Aims to provide OFWs access to financial services (e.g., claiming benefits and entitlements) through digital banking platforms. This involves simplified processing of transactions, support for heirs of deceased OFWs, and enhancement of financial knowledge and service accessibility.</p>

Source: DMW



The President greets the attendees of the 2023 OFW Family Day at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City on December 20, 2023.

Photo Credit: PCO



*Kasabay ng pagkayod ninyo sa ibayong dagat para sa mas magandang buhay ng inyong pamilya, ay ang aming pagsisikap na magpaunlad pa lalo sa ating bansa upang sa inyong pagbabalik ay makita naman ninyo ang malaking pagbabago dito sa Pilipinas."*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
OFW Family Day 2023  
December 20, 2023

### Box 6.3 Success Story on Reintegration



An undocumented OFW in Malaysia for nine years, Ms. Amelia Rimorin returned to the Philippines with no savings. She decided to put up a tailoring shop for ladies' bags. She bought a sewing machine for her business after receiving the PhP10,000 Livelihood Development Assistance Program financial assistance from the DMW-National Reintegration Center for OFWs in Cordillera.

Photo credit and Source: DMW

# Way Forward

Under the banner of *Bagong Pilipinas* and as the country's chief architect of foreign policy, I make use of every interaction with the international community to build bridges that will ensure long-lasting peace and stability in our region. Our foreign policy remains and will continue to be firmly grounded on the promotion of peace and national interests.

We acknowledge that there are challenges that require multilateral responses. We continue to be an active and responsible collaborator in addressing mutual concerns and global challenges. This includes defending the rules-based international order, promoting peaceful resolution of disputes, and safeguarding the environment and the maritime global commons. The growing recognition of the country by the international community signals a positive reception to our national policies and advocacies.

On the challenges we are encountering closer to home, we continue to seek dialogue, but not at the cost of our sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the lives of our people.

Global uncertainties also threaten the normalcy of the lives of more than 10 million Filipinos overseas. To better protect their interests and address their concerns, we are working to establish additional Migrant Workers Offices abroad. We are also ensuring that our workers' rights are protected even before they leave our borders by strengthening our anti-human trafficking and anti-illegal recruitment policies and procedures.

This Administration is guaranteeing a full cycle of reintegration program and services for our returning overseas Filipinos.

Filipino workers have established a special brand of service abroad, and we remain committed to making more training and upskilling programs, not only to maintain our global reputation, but also to continue providing unparalleled services to the world.

These efforts are complemented by the digitalization of our government processes. The DMW is set to re-launch the DMW Mobile App that will provide essential services for OFWs such as exit clearances and other services.

This Administration is institutionalizing reforms to ensure that soon, working abroad will no longer be a necessity for our countrymen, but a choice. We look forward to the completion and implementation of trade agreements that would complement our efforts to encourage more investments and create more opportunities for our people. These include the following:

- Philippines-ROK FTA;
- Upgraded ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand FTA;
- Philippines-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement;
- Philippines-EU FTA;
- ASEAN-Canada FTA;
- Upgrade of ASEAN Trade in Goods;
- Upgrade of ASEAN-China FTA; and
- ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement.

We are engaging the world to promote our transformation agenda for the betterment of our country and our people.

The Filipino community welcomes the President during his State Visit to Brunei Darussalam on May 28, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO



Cervantes Municipal Government employees participate in the electronic LGU (eLGU) training in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur on May 14, 2024.

*Photo Credit: DICT*

# CHAPTER 07



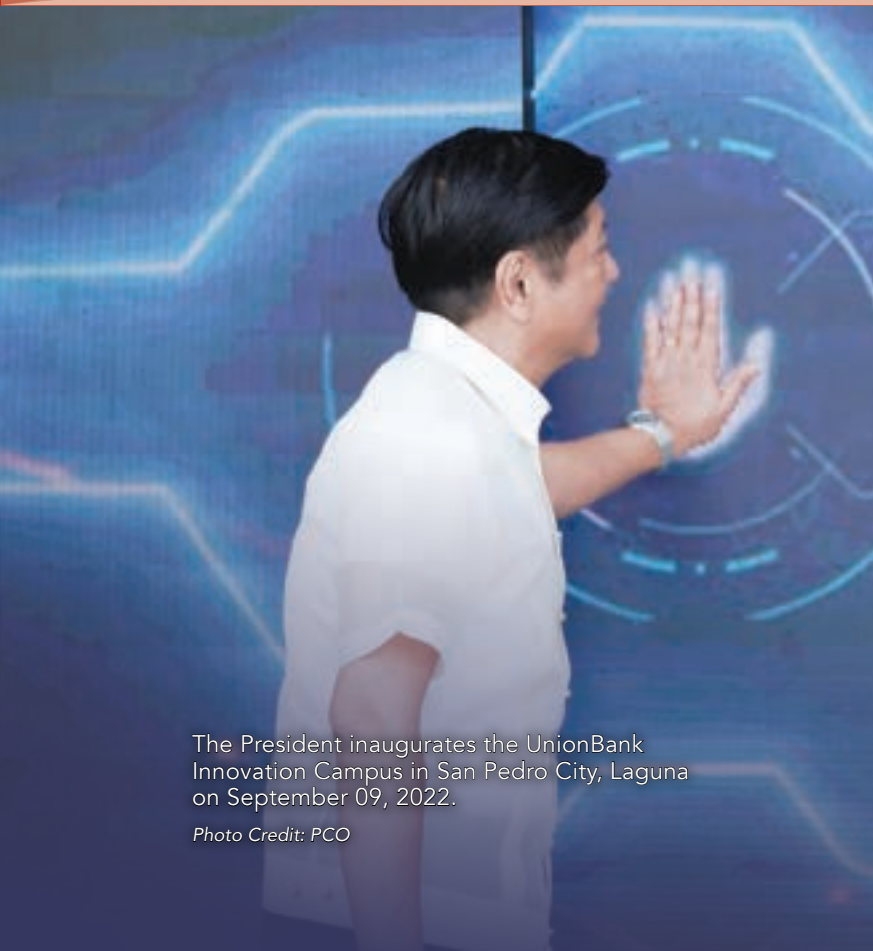
# Pursuing Digital Transformation and Good Governance Toward Inclusive Progress

Good governance is a cornerstone of every strong nation, and it must be inclusive to support nation-building. Consistent with this, we are ramping up priority projects on digitalization and bureaucratic efficiency at the national and local levels, and on capacitating LGUs.

In my second address to the nation in 2023, I emphasized that digitalization is the call of today, not the future. With the rapid pace of technology, our government is fully embracing digitalization to better

serve our people, ease the way we do business, and eradicate graft and corruption in all our transactions.

However, we are cognizant of the need to boost the country's competency in planning for long-term prosperity. In the 2024 World Competitiveness Survey, the Philippines remained at the 52<sup>nd</sup> spot out of 67 economies. This is similar to last year's ranking and four places down from the 48<sup>th</sup> rank in 2022.



The President inaugurates the UnionBank Innovation Campus in San Pedro City, Laguna on September 09, 2022.

Photo Credit: PCO

“

*And for this I pledge, government will neither ask the people for sacrifices it will not exact first upon itself, nor impose a burden that is heavier than what people can carry. Sa Bagong Pilipinas, ang pagbabago ay nagsisimula sa pamahalaan. While power emanates from the people, change must begin from the government.”*

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.  
Bagong Pilipinas Kick-Off Rally  
January 28, 2024



The DICT and DOF conduct a workshop on the integration of eLGU and eGovPay systems in the City of Manila on April 11, 2024.

Photo Credit: DOF

Further, Business Name Generator<sup>271</sup> ranked the Philippines as the most challenging country to launch a startup business in 2024. It noted that it would take 33 days to legally set up a business in the country.

To engage more people to set up their businesses and invest in the country, we are intensifying the implementation of programs, activities, and projects (PAPs) on digitalization, connectivity, and streamlining. These include developing applications, which our people could easily access via their mobile phones to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the need to physically transact at our offices.

Digitalization shall also ensure that our government is transparent and honest. This would strengthen public trust and encourage CSOs and the private sector to participate in governance through digital means.

Due to these efforts, including budget transparency measures, we stood out in

the 2023 Open Budget Survey (OBS), scoring 75 out of 100. The Philippines recorded a seven-point increase from the 2021 score of 68. This achievement surpassed the PDP 2023-2028's target score of 71 and secured for the country the top rank for budget transparency in Asia and the 15<sup>th</sup> position globally.<sup>272</sup>

Meanwhile, we hope to further improve our rank in the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The country's rank slightly rose from 116<sup>th</sup> in 2022 to 115<sup>th</sup> in 2023.<sup>273</sup> We remain optimistic that our continued push for digitalization and transparency would eventually place the Philippines in the ranks of the transparent and least corrupt nations.

We shall continue to empower our LGUs, allowing them to fully harness the economic potential of their localities. Rather than the national government making decisions for the LGUs, we will ensure that all programs directly affecting the people shall be continually coordinated with them. We are also bolstering programs to capacitate our LGUs to better serve their constituents, beginning with the implementation of a more inclusive full devolution initiative this year.

As enshrined in the vision of a *Bagong Pilipinas*, we continue to shape the government to be more accountable and responsive to the true needs of the people, especially at the grassroots, and one that makes good on its promise of a progressive nation.

271 An online think tank for business name ideas based in Sweden.

272 International Budget Partnership, 2023 OBS, May 2024.

273 Transparency International, 2023 CPI, January 2024.

# Making Government Services More Efficient and Accessible

We launched the *Bagong Pilipinas* campaign in January 2024. This campaign calls on the government to better serve the public. We are supporting this through the continuous digitalization and streamlining of our services.

## Digitalized Frontline Services<sup>274</sup>

We developed the following systems to facilitate the digitalization of all government frontline services:

### **eGov PH Application (eGov PH App).**

In June 2023, we launched the eGov PH App as a one-stop shop (OSS) platform for all national and local government services. As of May 2024, it had benefited 2.5 million verified subscribers.

Meanwhile, the following modules of the system are now functional:

**Digital National ID.** Effective July 24, 2023, we integrated the DICT's Digital National ID into the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys). This allowed the generation of Digital National IDs. As of June 03, 2024, 80.47 million digital IDs had been generated and available for public access. This is 91.76% of the 87.69 million Filipinos registered in the PhilSys.

**Electronic National Government Agency (NGA).** We are integrating the websites and systems of NGAs into the eGov PH App to make their online services more accessible to the public through a single-access platform.

As of May 2024, the DICT had integrated 45 out of 69 NGAs into the application. Among the services that the public can access are those of the GSIS, Pag-IBIG, and PhilHealth. We target to onboard the remaining NGAs by 2026.



The eGov PH App displays a sample Digital National ID.

Photo Credit: DICT

**eGovPay.** EO No. 170, s. 2022<sup>275</sup> mandates the utilization of digital payment and collection modes for all government transactions. Thus, we developed the eGovPay as a secured payment gateway. This makes transactions in the eGovernment platforms end-to-end, i.e., from application to payment.

274 DICT, June 28, 2024; DOF, June 28, 2024; DOJ, June 26, 2024; and NEDA, June 25, 2024.

275 Titled, "Adoption of Digital Payments for Government Disbursements and Collections."



*Yung eGov PH App naman is very useful siya for us, especially LGU employees in monitoring yung mga contributions natin. For example, we have the contribution sa GSIS, to Pag-IBIG fund, to PhilHealth. At the same time, very useful siya since yung mga accounts natin, especially from the PhilSys na national ID... pag wala tayong dalang wallet, magagamit natin yung phone lang natin."*

Rex Francis Lupango  
Employee  
Provincial Government of Masbate

**eHealth.** Through the eHealth, we are developing a universal healthcare system. As of May 2024, we had provided a map to locate nearby hospitals and health centers, and access to more than 18 million COVID-19 vaccination certificates. We also recorded over 1 million successful uses of PhilHealth member verification via the Digital National ID.

**eReport.** In July 2023, we launched the eReport system to allow the public to efficiently and directly channel their feedback, complaints, and suggestions to appropriate authorities, thereby fostering collaborative problem-solving.

It also allows citizens to report crimes and fire incidents, and other emergency situations. Since its launch, we have received 2,118 reports on various concerns.

To enable real-time receipt of crime reports, the eReport was also integrated into the PNP's iReport. The system is being improved to allow it to generate crime resolution rate.



**eTravel System.** Through this system, travelers may now fully accomplish their arrival and departure travel requirements online, thereby discontinuing paper-based declaration forms. We also utilized data from PhilSys registrations so that registered Filipinos, who use the eTravel through the eGov PH App, can do away with manually entering their personal information. From December 2022 to May 2024, the eTravel system had been utilized in 25.20 million transactions in 18 Philippine international airports and 36 seaports.

For the first time ever, 27 eTravel desks with 16 tablets and computer units were also placed in five international airports to make the system accessible to Filipino travelers who have yet to install the eGov PH App and to foreign tourists.



*Yung eTravel para sa akin maganda kasi through online na lahat magfi-fill up ng form para sa arrival at departure. So, mas pinabilis siya kaysa dun sa dati na pipirma pa sa papel."*

Niño Manuel  
Seafarer and eTravel user  
NAIA Terminal 3

**Electronic gates (e-gates).** To increase the efficiency of airport operations and ensure that our service is at par with international counterparts, we are replacing our manual immigration counters at major international airports nationwide with e-gates. The processing time per passenger at the e-gates averages at 10 to 15 seconds only as it is also integrated with the eTravel.



Filipino travelers use the e-gates at the NAIA Terminal 3 on May 23, 2024.

Photo Credit: BI

As of May 2024, there were 21 arrival e-gates in five major international airports in the country.

We also transitioned to label-free border clearance in April 2024, wherein inbound Filipino travelers receive an email confirmation of their arrival through their respective email addresses. We are committed to working toward reducing the processing time for each passenger and installing more e-gates nationwide.

**BIR electronic filing.** With 69% of taxpayers opting for electronic filing methods, we saw a significant increase in online tax collections from PhP2.16 trillion in 2022 to PhP2.52 trillion in 2023.

This is expected to further increase with the implementation of RA No. 11976,<sup>276</sup> which allows for a "file and pay anywhere" system through both manual and online means.

276 Titled, "Ease of Paying Taxes Act," which took effect on January 22, 2024.

## Pursued Innovations in the Philippine Electoral Process<sup>277</sup>

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) is transforming the country's election system to break down barriers and make it easier for the Filipino people to exercise their right to suffrage, starting in the 2023 *Barangay* and *Sangguniang Kabataan* Elections (BSKE).



Personnel of the Philippine Marines register at the RAP at Camp Iranun, Barira, Maguindanao del Norte on April 16, 2024.

Photo Credit: COMELEC

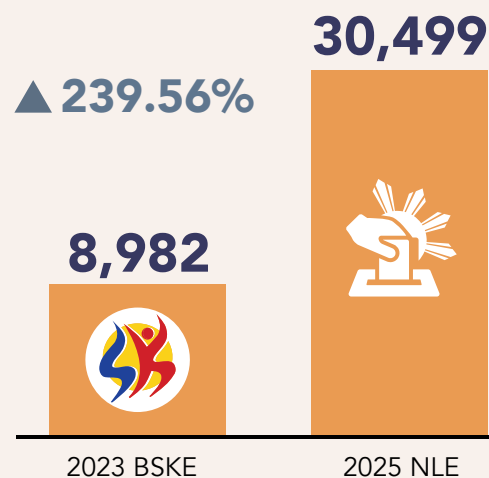
**Register Anywhere Program (RAP).** The COMELEC initially established RAP sites in the NCR and Regions V and VIII.<sup>278</sup> This allowed qualified Filipinos to register as voters anywhere nationwide without the need to return to their place of residency for the 2023 BSKE.

During its pilot-test from December 2022 to January 2023, voter registrations were conducted in 13 participating malls, educational institutions, and government agencies. A total of 8,982 individuals registered during the pilot-test.

With the positive reception of the RAP,<sup>279</sup> the COMELEC further expanded its implementation to include all Offices of the Election Officer within capital cities, towns and highly urbanized cities nationwide, and a longer registration period in preparation for the 2025 National and Local Elections (NLE).

As of June 14, 2024, the number of RAP registrants had almost quadrupled since the 2023 BSKE (see *Figure 7.1*). The COMELEC targets to reach more by the end of the RAP period on August 31, 2024.

Figure 7.1 RAP Registrants



Source: COMELEC

**Mall Voting Program and Early Voting Hours.** During the 2023 BSKE, the COMELEC conducted a pilot test of mall voting in 11 participating malls in the NCR and Regions V and VII to provide voters with a more convenient and accessible means to cast their votes.

277 COMELEC, June 28, 2024.

278 The COMELEC conducted the pilot-testing of the RAP in malls where they have existing MOAs and areas that are most convenient and easily accessible to voters.

279 The RAP was granted the Electoral Ergonomy Award by the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies during the 19<sup>th</sup> International Electoral Affairs Symposium & Awards Ceremony held in Lisbon, Portugal in November 2023.

Further, in select pilot-test areas, members of the vulnerable sector, such as senior citizens and persons with disability (PWDs), were allowed to vote from 5:00 AM to 7:00 AM, which is earlier than the regular voting hours of 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

For the 2025 NLE, mall voting will be conducted in all partner malls of the COMELEC across the country.<sup>280</sup> Early voting hours will also be implemented nationwide.



### Streamlined Government Processes

A streamlined bureaucracy would not only ease transactions for the public but also cause businesses and investments to prosper. Under this principle, we implemented the following:

**Streamlined licensing and permitting process for IFPs.**<sup>281</sup> On April 30, 2024, we issued EO No. 59<sup>282</sup> to streamline the licensing and permitting requirements for approved IFPs. This also provided for the establishment of OSS within NGAs and LGUs involved in the IFP permitting process. The EO paved the way for the electronic submission of requirements and digital payment of fees.

### Green Lanes for Strategic Investment.<sup>283</sup>

Through EO No. 18, s. 2023,<sup>284</sup> we fostered a more business-enabling and competitive environment for our investors by streamlining the requirements for permitting applications of strategic investments and ensuring seamless coordination among government agencies.

Through this, we hope to entice more investors to engage in the Philippines (see Chapter 1).

**Improved consular services.**<sup>285</sup> To facilitate the efficient and inclusive issuance of Philippine passports, we signed into law RA No. 11983<sup>286</sup> on March 11, 2024. This law mandates the DFA to establish and maintain an online application portal and electronic OSS readily accessible in its official website. It also authorizes the DFA to provide offsite and mobile passport services in areas outside of consular offices and foreign service posts and set up special lanes for the elderly, PWDs, and pregnant women, among others.

As of May 31, 2024, there were 79,234 Filipinos who benefited from the law since its implementation.

Further, on March 19, 2024, we launched the e-Apostille for civil registry e-Certificates from the PSA. As of June 24, 2024, we have issued 1,462 e-Apostilles. This service shall be integrated into the eGov PH App by 2026.

280 Provided that the malls meet the minimum requirements for designation as voting centers and polling places under the Omnibus Election Code.

281 Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), June 24, 2024.

282 Titled, "Streamlining the Permitting Process for IFPs."

283 ARTA, June 24, 2024.

284 Titled, "Constituting Green Lanes for Strategic Investments."

285 DFA, June 25, 2024.

286 Titled, "New Philippine Passport Act."

# Fighting Corruption through Transparency

Our anti-corruption initiatives are focused on promoting transparency and accountability, with digitalization as our primary tool. Aligned with this, we initiated several reforms to increase participatory governance. We also ensured that those involved in graft and corruption faced the rule of law.

## Institutionalized the Philippine-Open Government Partnership (PH-OGP)<sup>287</sup>

We institutionalized the PH-OGP through EO No. 31, s. 2023<sup>288</sup> to realize our commitments to the OGP.<sup>289</sup> As a result, the Philippines remained the leading country in Southeast Asia for Public Participation, ranking 13<sup>th</sup> worldwide with a score of 33 out of 100, far exceeding the global average of 15.<sup>290</sup>

We were also able to publish the 6<sup>th</sup> PH-OGP National Action Plan (NAP) in December 2023, the country's first medium term action plan which will be implemented until June 2027. This Plan consists of 10 commitments being implemented by eight NGAs<sup>291</sup> and their CSO partners to enhance public participation through digitalization and localization of open government principles.

Further, we launched the OGPinas! on October 11, 2023. This nationwide advocacy campaign helps us to directly engage with local communities to

empower them to actively leverage on PH-OGP processes and spaces in co-creating and shaping more responsive policies. As of May 2024, the OGPinas! Roadshow had been conducted in the cities of Quezon, Iloilo, Baguio, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Cotabato, Cebu, Legazpi, and Puerto Princesa.

Overall, the combined efforts in the 6<sup>th</sup> NAP and the OGPinas! Roadshows have strengthened the Philippines' anti-corruption framework, promoting a more open and accountable government.



DBM Secretary Pangandaman leads the launching of the OGPinas! in Quezon City on October 11, 2023.

Photo Credit: DBM

## Resolved 8888 Concerns<sup>292</sup>

We are maintaining the 8888 Citizens' Complaint Center (CCC)<sup>293</sup> as a means for everyone to raise concerns on acts of red tape and corruption.

287 DBM, June 28, 2024.

288 Titled, "Institutionalizing the PH-OGP and for Other Purposes."

289 OGP is a broad international partnership of national and local governments and CSOs to promote transparent, participatory, inclusive, and accountable governance.

290 International Budget Partnership, 2023 OBS, May 2024.

291 These are the Supreme Court, PCO, DBM, COMELEC, Government Procurement Policy Board-Technical Support Office, DILG-Support for Local Government Program, DOF, and NEDA.


292 8888 CCC, June 25, 2024.

293 Pursuant to EO No. 6, s. 2016, titled "Institutionalizing the 8888 Citizens' Complaint Hotline and Establishing the 8888 CCC."



Of the 271,958 tickets referred by the 8888 channel from July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024, 245,056 (90.11%) were acted upon by concerned government agencies. Further, in 2023, five agencies with at least 1,000 tickets received recorded 100% resolution rates and the highest compliance rates with the 72-hour prescribed response time (see Figure 7.2).

**Figure 7.2 Top Government Agencies in Responding to 8888 Concerns**

	Concerns Received	Compliance Rate (%)
	Bureau of Internal Revenue <b>1,407</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	National Labor Relations Commission <b>1,104</b>	<b>99.82</b>
	Department of Social Welfare and Development <b>1,997</b>	<b>99.35</b>
	Department of Labor and Employment <b>1,363</b>	<b>98.68</b>
	Pag-IBIG <b>1,757</b>	<b>98.41</b>
	All NGAs and LGUs must provide concrete and specific actions to any complaint, concern, or request lodged through any of the 8888 communication channels within <b>72 hours</b> from receipt of the same.	

Source: 8888 CCC

## Made Dishonest Government Personnel Accountable

There is no place for corrupt and abusive government personnel under the *Bagong Pilipinas*. Hence, we made sure that those who were proven to have spent public funds for personal gain and used their positions to commit wrongdoings faced the rule of law.

**Removed and penalized scalawags in the PNP.** Due to their involvement in various crimes, such as illegal drugs, we dismissed 1,316 unscrupulous law enforcers in the PNP from July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024.<sup>294</sup>

We also imposed administrative penalties on other erring police officers (see Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1 Penalties Imposed on Other Erring PNP Personnel**  
(July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024)

Penalty	Number of PNP Personnel
Suspension	2,128
Reprimand	852
Demotion	306
Forfeiture of Salary	206
Withholding of Privileges	131
Restriction	90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,713</b>

Source: DILG

294 DILG, June 24, 2024.

We implemented programs to promote integrity, accountability, and professionalism within the PNP (see *Figure 7.3*).<sup>295</sup>

**Figure 7.3 Programs to Professionalize the PNP**



### **Filed charges against erring government personnel.**

**BOC.**<sup>296</sup> From January to December 2023, we investigated 94 erring personnel. Of whom, 19 were issued with show-cause orders, 16 were charged administratively, 14 were suspended, while one was disciplined. The cases of the rest of the personnel are either ongoing investigation or have been dismissed.

### **National Food Authority (NFA).**<sup>297</sup>

We see to it that agricultural officials and employees are taking good care of our farmers and fisherfolk. When we learned that a number of NFA personnel were reportedly involved in the sale of rice buffer stocks to selected traders, we immediately initiated actions to ferret out the truth.

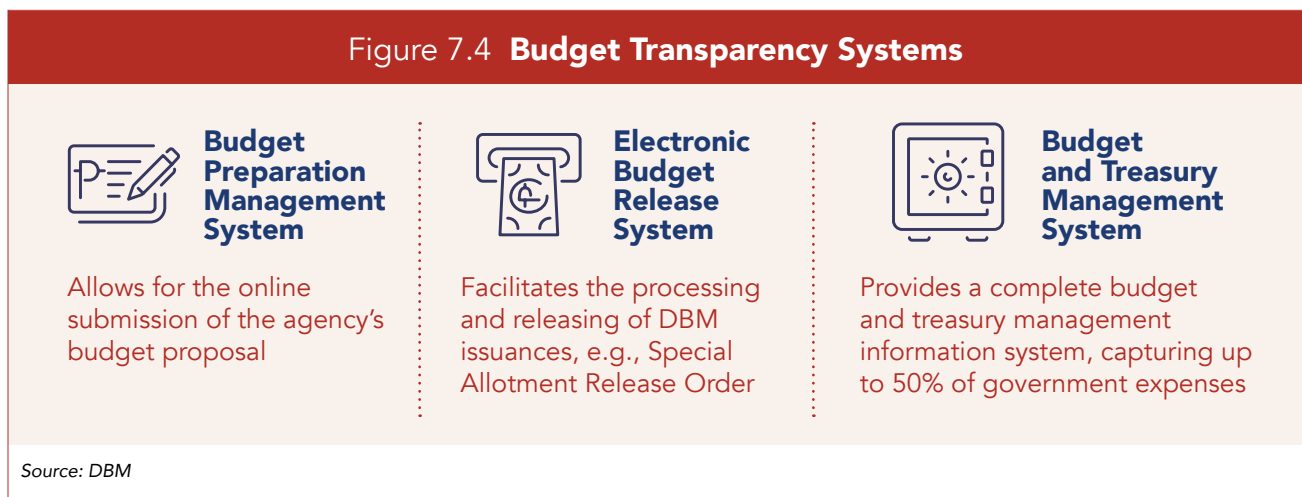
In compliance with the order of the Office of the Ombudsman, we enforced the suspension of 141 NFA personnel on March 04, 2024 to ensure the fair and unbiased conduct of investigations against them. As of May 14, 2024, the suspension imposed against 97 personnel had been lifted. The DA continues to conduct parallel investigations on these personnel.

### **Pursued Budget Transparency**<sup>298</sup>

It is incumbent upon us to spend public funds on the correct PAPs, the right way, at the right time, and in accordance with the budget allocated for them. To support this, we digitalized the budget process by minimizing human discretion on significant budget allocation or distribution decisions (see *Figure 7.4*).

295 DILG, June 24, 2024.  
296 DOF, June 28, 2024.  
297 DA, June 27, 2024.  
298 DBM, June 28, 2024.

Figure 7.4 Budget Transparency Systems



## Promoting Freedom of Information (FOI) and the Rights of Media



We value the FOI's potency in empowering our people to make informed decisions to participate fully in the democratic process, and hold their representatives accountable without fear or apprehension. Building on the gains from the establishment of the FOI Program in 2016,<sup>299</sup> we have strengthened it further to support our e-governance initiatives and combat fake news and disinformation.

Media plays a critical role in arming the citizenry with the truth and deepening their discernment in this age of mass disinformation. Hence, we remain steadfast in our endeavor of fostering an environment where journalists can freely practice their profession without fear of threats, reprisals, and violence.

299 Pursuant to EO No. 2, s. 2016, titled, "Operationalizing in the Executive Branch the People's Constitutional Right to Information and the State Policies to Full Public Disclosure and Transparency in the Public Service and Providing Guidelines Therefor."

## Promoted FOI<sup>300</sup>

Through technology, we improved the features of the electronic FOI (eFOI) portal to better facilitate the people's requests for information (see *Figure 7.5*). As a result, we recorded 141,216 additional registered public users in the eFOI portal from July 01, 2022 to April 30, 2024. This is 24.40% higher than the 113,520 registered users from 2016 to June 2022. Further, 618 NGAs were onboarded to the portal as of April 30, 2024.

This initiative is an effective tool in providing the public with quick access to information, thereby helping them in their decision-making.



*I applaud the eFOI in its efforts to connect the people in need of data and information to the government offices concerned. I also encourage everyone to use eFOI. It is free, informative, and very useful."*

Hernan Pantolla  
Statistician  
De La Salle University  
and Far Eastern University

Figure 7.5 **Initiatives to Strengthen the FOI Program**

### Application of Data Science and AI to the eFOI Portal



Generates three recommended agencies based on the user's typed keywords and turnaround time per eFOI request



Automatically redacts personally identifiable information of users



Analyzes and categorizes incoming requests based on topics and themes



### Secured Registration of Public Users

Identifies fake IDs, thereby eliminating duplicate and dummy users



### eFOI Open Data

Allows the uploading of publicly available documents identified and verified by their FOI Officers



### FOI Messenger

Allows FOI Officers to communicate with each other to efficiently refer FOI requests to the appropriate agency



### Improved User Interface

Makes processing and querying requests easier and faster

Source: PCO

## Protected the Rights and Welfare of Media Personnel

**Investigated cases of media killings and other threats.**<sup>301</sup> We will not tolerate any attacks on journalists, and those who threaten press freedom will be dealt with accordingly. I ordered our PNP to exert all efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice (see Table 7.2).

Journalist	Case Status
Percival "Percy Lapid" Mabasa (work-related)	The arrest warrants for murder against the principal suspects was signed on April 14, 2024. The victim's self-confessed gunman was sentenced to 16 years in prison on May 06, 2024.
Cresenciano Bundoquin (work-related)	On July 06, 2023, a warrant of arrest for murder and attempted murder was issued against the suspect. He is now under the custody of the NBI and undergoing trial.
Juan "DJ Johnny Walker" Jumalon (work-related)	On April 29, 2024, the alleged gunman was arrested. His accomplices were earlier arrested on March 15, 2024. All suspects are currently undergoing trial.
Renato Blanco (non-work related)	A complaint for murder was filed against the suspect on September 19, 2022. The trial is ongoing.

Source: PTFoMS

Meanwhile, we continue to strengthen the Presidential Task Force on Media Security (PTFoMS) to lead the government's response against cases of violence and attacks on media personnel.

### Released the retirement pay of the Intercontinental Broadcasting Corporation-13 (IBC-13) employees.

<sup>302</sup>

We are aware that the former IBC-13 personnel, who dedicated their lives in serving the organization, deserved the retirement benefits they worked and sacrificed for.

As part of our commitment to protecting the welfare of media workers, we released the long-overdue retirement pay of 145 employees of the IBC-13, ending their decades of waiting.<sup>303</sup>



*Retiree po ako ng 34 years sa IBC-13...masaya po ako dahil bahagi po ng natanggap ko sa IBC-13 ay naibayad ko po sa pagpapalibing sa kanya [ina]."*

Marietta Camacho  
IBC-13 Retiree  
Calasiao, Pangasinan

301 PTFoMS, June 20, 2024.

302 PCO, June 21, 2024.

303 The network lost most of its income due to lack of primetime block time shows, or those that pay the station for airtime, since 2004. While there was a brief reprieve from 2011 to 2012, when it landed a fresh block time agreement, there had been none since. It has been receiving subsidy from the national government since November 2019.

# Capacitating LGUs for Improved Service Delivery



The President graces the 2024 General Assembly of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines at the Grand Ballroom, Marriott Manila on February 27, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO

LGUs are invaluable partners of the national government in the journey toward sustained progress. As the primary provider of government services, it is through our LGUs that Filipinos directly exercise their right to participate in governance.

The Local Government Code of 1991 provides for our LGUs' autonomy and presents us with a set of guidelines to make our LGUs more efficient, empowered, and self-sustaining. However, given the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is our responsibility to discover, explore, and employ more innovative ways of capacitating our localities. This is to ensure that LGUs, at every level, can better respond to the demands of the times and the unique needs of their constituents.

## Strengthened Local Autonomy<sup>304</sup>

We continue to support our LGUs' autonomy and strengthen their capacities through the following:

**Support and Assistance Fund to Participatory Budgeting (SAFPB) Program.** With a PhP1-billion budget, we started implementing the SAFPB in June 2024 to fund eligible water, sanitation, and hygiene projects.

It covers 75 municipalities nationwide belonging to 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> income classes. Currently, there are 80 projects for completion,<sup>305</sup> including water supply system and sanitation and hygiene facility projects.

304 DBM, June 28, 2024; and DILG, June 24, 2024.

305 All 80 projects are ongoing.

**Public Financial Management Competency Program (PFMCP).**

We continue to enhance the technical skills and competencies of our public financial managers on planning, directing, and controlling financial resources, both at the national and local levels, through the PFMCP.





From September 27, 2023 to May 15, 2024, we capacitated 3,706 local public financial managers nationwide.

**Growth Equity Fund (GEF).** We provided support to the PAPs of the disadvantaged LGUs through the release of the GEF.<sup>306</sup> The DILG also provided assistance to the beneficiary LGUs in the submission of necessary plans and documents relative to the project design.



From July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024, **465** out of 549 sub-projects funded by the **GEF** were completed across 415 LGUs. These benefited **712,991** households nationwide.

**These include the construction of:**

-  evacuation centers
-  water supply facilities
-  sanitation and hygiene facilities
-  public markets

**Financial Assistance to LGUs (FALGU) Program.**

To support LGUs in constructing, rehabilitating, and improving various local infrastructure, the DILG diligently monitored the implementation of the FALGU Program across LGUs to ensure its effective execution.



From July 01, 2022 to May 31, 2024, **3,562** out of 4,834 sub-projects funded through the **FALGU** were completed across 1,987 LGUs. These benefited **26,717,553** households nationwide.

**These include the construction of:**

-  day-care centers
-  sports facilities
-  multi-purpose buildings
-  post-harvest facilities

**Recognized High Performing LGUs**

We continue to strengthen the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) to recognize performing LGUs. Specifically, we enhanced the program’s 2024 criteria by maintaining the parameters on electronic business one-stop shop (eBOSS) to further encourage our LGUs to digitalize their processes. We also included the implementation of the Administration’s priorities, e.g., *KADIWA ng Pangulo* and localized FMRNP, to engage the LGUs’ support for these programs and their eventual inclusion as indicators for 2025. Qualified LGUs shall receive the SGLG Incentive Fund (SGLGIF).

306 EO No. 138, s. 2021, titled, “Full Devolution of Certain Functions of the Executive Branch to Local Governments, Creation of a Committee on Devolution, and for Other Purposes,” established the GEF to address issues on marginalization, unequal development, high poverty incidence, and disparities in the net fiscal capacities of LGUs.

In 2023, we released SGLGIF worth PhP981 million to 493 LGU awardees. Each province received PhP4 million, while each city and municipality received PhP2.3 million and PhP1.8 million, respectively (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3 2023 SGLGIF Awardees

Level	No. of Awardees	Total Amount (in PhP million)
Provinces	28	112.0
Cities	64	147.2
Municipalities	401	721.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>981.0</b>

Source: DILG

Among these, 22 LGUs sustained their good performance since 2015, while 94 LGUs emerged as first-time awardees.

### Enabled the Digitalization and Streamlining of LGU Processes<sup>307</sup>

Alongside our pursuit of ease of doing business at the national level is our effort to encourage the same at the local level. To bolster the digitalization and streamlining of LGU processes, we undertook the following:

#### **Broadened the adoption of the eLGU system among LGUs.**

The eLGU system is a platform that offers interoperable and expanded services, such as Business Permit Licensing, Local Civil Registry, and issuance of Community Tax Certificate, Real Property Tax, and Barangay Clearance.

It complements our efforts in eliminating unnecessary layers of bureaucracy as well as making government transactions easier and more efficient.

To encourage more LGUs to adopt the eLGU as their eBOSS, the DILG, DICT, and ARTA conducted eLGU caravans beginning in March 2024. Twenty-two more caravans will be conducted nationwide within 2024 to achieve the target of digitalizing the remaining 456 non-automated cities and municipalities by 2028.



As of May 22, 2024, **1,178** out of 1,634 LGUs have automated their processes. Of these, **741** have adopted the eLGU system.

Through the caravan, we were also able to train LGUs to fully operationalize the eLGU system for their daily transactions and services to their constituents.



Bulakan Municipal Government employees participate in the eLGU training in Bulakan, Bulacan on February 28, 2024.

Photo Credit: DICT

307 DICT, June 28, 2024; DILG, June 24, 2024; and ARTA, June 24, 2024.





# eBOSS

electronic Business One-Stop Shop

A single online platform that facilitates end-to-end business registration.

**Section 11(c) of RA No. 11032**, or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018, mandates LGUs to implement a fully operational eBOSS within three years after the effectivity of the law.



processing business permit applications



issuing permits, certificates, etc.



accepting payments



issuing tax bills



*The introduction of the eLGU system in Polangui... has streamlined administrative processes related to business permits, community tax, and civil registry, resulting in improved efficiency and more effective delivery of government services. Prioritizing the implementation of government programs and projects like the eLGU system provides our municipality the mechanism to be electronically enabled as the LGU navigates to evolve and transform into the facets of digitization."*

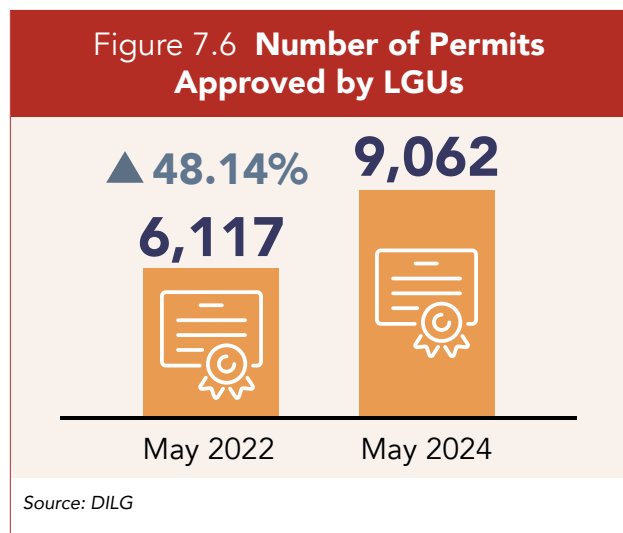
Mayor Raymond Adrian Salceda  
Municipality of Polangui, Albay



*Sa dami ng maliit at malalaking negosyo na dumarating, kailangan natin ng mabilis at maaasahang sistema sa pakikipagtransaksyon... Ito ang kahalagahan ng "eLGU" at "eReport Systems"—faster, more convenient, and streamlined services ang ibinibigay nito para sa business permit and licensing, local tax processing na nasa Revenue Code, local civil registration, real property tax, barangay clearance, other clearances, at maging ang information dissemination sa mga serbisyo ng pamahalaan."*

Mayor Vergel Meneses  
Municipality of Bulakan, Bulacan

**Streamlined the permitting process for the construction of telecommunications and internet infrastructure.** We issued EO No. 32<sup>308</sup> on July 04, 2023 to streamline the requirements for the issuance of national or local permit or clearance in the construction, installation, repair, operation, and maintenance of telecommunications and internet infrastructure. This significantly increased the number of permits approved by LGUs (see Figure 7.6).



### Passed Laws to Support the Capacity Building of LGUs<sup>309</sup>

#### **Enacted the Automatic Income Classification of LGUs Act.**

We signed into law RA No. 11964 on October 26, 2023. Through this law, the DOF, in consultation with the NEDA and LGU leagues can update the income classification of LGUs once every three years based on their current financial capabilities. This is to ensure that their classification conforms with their prevailing economic conditions and overall financial status.

This also paves the way for a more responsive approach to fostering local autonomy, boosting LGU revenues, and empowering them to achieve fiscal sustainability.

We are looking forward to the full implementation of the new income classification of LGUs on January 01, 2025.

**Enacted the RPVARA.** This law will enhance the LGUs' capacity to generate local revenues from real property. It will also create a Real Property Information System, which will maintain an up-to-date electronic database of all real property transactions and declarations in the country (see Chapter 1).

#### **Prohibited the Collection of Pass-through Fees on National Roads<sup>310</sup>**

On September 25, 2023, we issued EO No. 41<sup>311</sup> to ease the delivery and lower the cost of transporting goods, thereby addressing the rising prices of commodities.

As of June 21, 2024, 40 LGUs suspended the collection of pass-through fees in adherence to EO No. 41. The DILG also conducts entrapment operations to run after violators of the EO.

We continue to call on our LGUs to comply with the EO to support our goal of reducing logistics constraints and enhancing economic efficiency.

308 Titled, "Streamlining the Permitting Process for the Construction of Telecommunications and Internet Infrastructure."

309 DOF, June 28, 2024.

310 DILG, June 24, 2024.

311 Titled, "Prohibiting the Collection of Pass-Through Fees on National Roads and Urging LGUs to Suspend the Collection of Any Form of Fees Upon All Types of Vehicles Transporting Goods Under Section 153 or 155 of RA No. 7160 or the LGC."

# Way Forward

As we move toward a *Bagong Pilipinas*, we are doubling our efforts to push for more digitalized and secured processes to unburden our people from physically transacting with the national and local governments.

We are working on the completion of the eGov PH App by operationalizing additional modules. We hope to reach over 50 million users of this app by the end of 2024.

We are also assisting our social service institutions in streamlining and digitalizing their services that are still manually availed. In April 2024, we facilitated a reengineering and process streamlining workshop with the PhilHealth, SSS, and Pag-IBIG. We are working to digitalize their streamlined processes within 2024 and integrate the same into the eGov PH App.

To make procurement more efficient, we are developing new features in the modernized Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System. With this, we also hope to increase the number of CSOs participating in our procurement process, pursuant to the Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA).

We are installing more e-gates in major airports nationwide to make operations more efficient and seamless for both incoming and outgoing travelers.

We are also expanding the coverage of the Report Card Survey 2.0, which started in 2022, from 860 in 2023 to 904 government agencies this 2024. This will facilitate a broader assessment of the quality of public service delivery across diverse sectors and regions.

We are further capacitating our LGUs to achieve genuine autonomy through a better and more inclusive full devolution initiative. We target to issue the order amending EO No. 138, s. 2021 this 2024, with clearer parameters on which functions, services, and facilities shall be retained with the national government and devolved to LGUs.

Ultimately, these plans will only be strengthened through the passage of the following key measures:

- National Government Rightsizing Program;
- New GPRA;
- New Government Auditing Code;
- *Konektadong Pinoy* Act or Open Access on Data Transmission Act;
- E-Governance Act; and
- Budget Modernization Bill.

All these efforts aim to propel us nearer toward the *Bagong Pilipinas* we aspire for. Thus, I am calling on all Filipinos to join and work with the government so we can build a better future for our children and the generations to come.

The President addresses the public during the *Bagong Pilipinas* Kick-Off Rally in Manila on January 28, 2024.

Photo Credit: PCO



# Conclusion

Two years into office and I can proudly report to the Filipino people that our country is in a much stronger position than when we came to office. Sustained by the people's trust and powered by our unity as a people and as a country, we are forging ahead in building a better nation.

The Philippines is back as one of the best performing economies in Asia in 2023. Now, we are steering the course to be the country with the best performing economy in Southeast Asia by 2028.

However, we know that high food and energy prices continue to burden Filipino families. As such, we are utilizing all policy tools at our disposal to keep prices within reach of consumers.

As a long-term solution to food and energy security, we are adopting new methods apt for modern times. We invested in the modernization of agriculture and pursued a genuine agrarian reform program. We also promoted greater investments in power generation, with greater emphasis on renewable energy sources. This is important especially as we try to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Through the reforms in the ease of doing business and our active investment promotion activities, we were able to attract over a trillion pesos in investments in 2023. These are expected to create over a hundred thousand jobs for our people.

To ensure that Filipinos would be able to take advantage of these job opportunities, we are working to increase their employability through upskilling and retooling initiatives. The more permanent solution to this is the improvement of our education system.

Our children are being educated in a system that promotes creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking to excel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We are also laying down the groundwork so that we can sustainably harness and optimize our resources, such as water and power, for future generations.

On the health sector, we are tackling its weaknesses by ensuring that health facilities and health services are accessible to all, especially the poor and disadvantaged.

Insurgency and internal conflicts are envisioned to end within my term. Alongside this, we are instituting reforms in our law enforcement and justice system to support peace and order and an environment conducive to business growth. We stand with the LGUs in the pursuit of good governance and sustainable development.

Each administration faced difficult challenges and identified different priorities, but we all believe in one thing—our nation's success lies in the success of every Filipino. Our goal is more than making our people live a comfortable life, but a life worthy of dignity. This is not just a dream, but a promise that this Administration will spare no effort to achieve.

*Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipino para sa Bagong Pilipinas.*

