

The Philippines

Capital: Manila

Area: 300,000 sq km

Languages: Filipino and English, with 8 major dialects (Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango and Pangasinense)

Ethnic groups: Tagalog 28.1%, Cebuano 13.1%, Ilocano 9%, Bisaya/Binisaya 7.6%, Hiligaynon Ilonggo 7.5%, Bikol 6%, Waray 3.4% other 25.3% (2000 census)

Administrative divisions: 3 geographical areas (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) with 17 regions, 79 provinces, 117 cities, 1,500 municipalities and 41,975 barangays (the smallest political unit)

System of government: Republic

Currency: Philippine peso

THE PHILIPPINES IN FIGURES	
Human Development Index (2003)	0.758 ⁶⁵
Demography	
Population (2005)	83.1 million ⁶⁶
Population under 15 (as % of total)(2003)	36.1% ⁶⁷
Economy	
GDP (2004)	US\$ 84.6 billion ⁶⁸
GNI (per capita) (2004)	US\$ 1,170 ⁶⁹
Unemployment (as % of total labour force)(April 2006)	8.2% ⁷⁰
Inflation rate (April 2004)	7.1% ⁷¹
Population living below the national poverty line (1990-2002)	36.1% ⁷²
Health and education	
Life expectancy at birth (2004)	70.8 years ⁷³
Adult literacy rate (2004)	92.6% ⁷⁴
Gross primary enrolment ratio (2003)	112.5% ⁷⁵
Survival rate to Grade 5 (2001-2002)	76% ⁷⁶
Gross secondary enrolment ratio (2003)	83.9% ⁷⁷
Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP) (2002)	3.1% ⁷⁸
Public expenditure on health (as % of GDP) (2002)	1.1% ⁷⁹

⁶⁵ UNDP, Human Development Report 2005.

⁶⁶ UNFPA, State of the World Population 2005; figure according to National Statistics Office, 85.2 million.

⁶⁷ UNDP, Human Development Report 2005; 2005 figure according to National Statistics Office, 36.9%.

⁶⁸ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006.

⁶⁹ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006.

⁷⁰ National Statistics Office.

⁷¹ National Statistics Office.

⁷² UNDP, Human Development Report 2005; 2003 figure according to National Statistical Coordination Board, 30.4%.

⁷³ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006.

⁷⁴ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006.

⁷⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006; 2003-04 figure according to Department of Education, 106.2%.

⁷⁶ UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2006.

⁷⁷ World Bank, World Development Indicators database, April 2006; 2003-04 figure according to Department of Education, 83.6%.

⁷⁸ UNDP, Human Development Report 2005.

⁷⁹ UNDP, Human Development Report 2005.

Background

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands, stretching from the south of China to the northern tip of Borneo. Much of the country is mountainous and subject to earthquakes and eruptions from around 20 active volcanoes.

The Philippines has the highest birth rate in Asia. The bulk of the population lives on just 11 of the country's islands. There has been a continuing trend of internal migration from rural to urban areas since at least 1991. According to the 2000 census, 52 per cent of the population lived in rural areas and 48 per cent in urban areas, including about 12 per cent in metropolitan Manila. Updated estimates based on the 2000 census indicate that, in 2005, the age group 0–14 accounted for 35 per cent of the nation's total population.

Economy and development

Although it once boasted one of the region's best-performing economies, in more recent decades the Philippines has not been able to achieve a sustained period of rapid economic growth. In spite of its rich natural and human resources, the country is saddled with a large national debt, and more than 20 million people live in poverty. The economy is heavily dependent on the billions of dollars sent home each year by the huge Filipino overseas workforce.

In 2004, the Philippines achieved real economic growth of 6 per cent, up from 4.5 per cent in 2003. However, with the population expanding by more than 2 per cent annually, the actual improvement in living standards has been modest.

On average, employment has been growing in the past few years. However, unemployment has remained at 8.1 per cent as of January 2006, as the number of jobs generated has been inadequate to absorb the influx of entrants into the labour market. The majority of the

unemployed are young people aged 15 to 24. Youth account for almost half of the total unemployed (48.7 per cent), with employment opportunities scarce for the unskilled and inexperienced and for persons whose education does not match industry needs. Youth unemployment has the highest rate compared to all age groups and is more than twice the national unemployment rate.

Education

Philippine education is based on the American system, with English as the medium of instruction. Schools are classified into public (government) or private (non-government). The six years of primary education are free and compulsory; the four-year secondary education programme is free but not compulsory.

According to the Department of Education, for the school year 2003–04, a total of 13 million students were enrolled in elementary education (about 88.8 per cent of 6- to 11-year-olds), including 12.1 million in public schools run by local government and 920,674 in private schools. A total of 6.3 million students were enrolled in secondary education (about 59.2 per cent of 12- to 15-year-olds), including about 5 million in public schools and 1.2 million in private schools.

Ideally, there should be one public elementary school per barangay and one public high school per municipality. For the 2004–05 school year, the Department of Education reported that 267 barangays were still without a public elementary school, while five municipalities did not yet have public high schools.

A law against the worst forms of child labour (Republic Act No. 9231) was passed in Congress and signed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in December 2003. It mandates the Department of Education to ensure and guarantee the access of working children to both formal and non-formal education.

Child labour situation

Information on child labour in the country is obtainable from three official sources: the Survey on Children (SOC), the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS). All surveys are conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO). The SOC was conducted in 1995 and 2001, both with the assistance of the ILO. Using a reference period of the past 12 months, the SOC reported an increase in the number of economically active children from 3.6 million in 1995 to 4 million in 2001.

Based on the 2001 SOC, 37 per cent of the working children aged 5–17 did their job on a seasonal basis or only during school vacations. One in four working children was employed as a permanent worker. According to different occupations, the majority of the working children aged 5–17 worked as labourers and unskilled workers (2.6 million or 65 per cent). Others worked as service workers and shop and market sales workers (544,000 or 13.5 per cent) and as farmers, forestry workers and fishermen (454,000 or 11.3 per cent). Looking at the situation by industry or sector, it was recorded that more than 50 per cent of working children aged 5–17 (2.1 million or 53 per cent) were engaged in agriculture, hunting and forestry. Notable percentages of other working children could also be found in wholesale and retail, repair of motor vehicles and personal and household goods (747,000 or 18.6 per cent), in private households with employed persons (230,000 or 5.7 per cent), fishing (207,000 or 5.2 per cent) and manufacturing (186,000 or 4.6 per cent).

About 2.4 million or 59.4 per cent of the 4 million working children were exposed to a hazardous work environment. Physical hazards were the most common faced by working children and around 1.1 million (44.4 per cent) were exposed to physical hazards only; 382,000

(16 per cent) were in danger of physical and chemical hazards; and another 352,000 (14.7 per cent) were in physically and biologically hazardous working places. Around 237,000 (9.9 per cent) of working children aged 5–17 were exposed to the three forms of hazardous environment.

In view of the need to have a regular source of information on working children which could provide selected statistics, the NSO expanded the coverage of the quarterly LFS in 2003 to include those children aged 5–14 and included selected indicators on education. Compared to the SOC, the LFS data revealed a substantially lower number of working children owing to the use of “the past week” reference period, i.e. interviewees were asked whether they had worked during the seven days prior to the survey.

In October 2004, the LFS revealed that around 2.116 million children – or 9.1 per cent of the 25.210 million aged 5–17 – were working. The number of working children had decreased from 2.226 million over the last year, or by 0.7 per cent. Children aged 15–17 were more likely to be employed than younger groups. More boys than girls were in work. However, a greater proportion of girls worked more than eight hours a day. Nearly 60 per cent of working children were employed in agriculture, hunting and forestry. More than half of working children were unpaid.

Meanwhile, the APIS provides information linking child labour to poverty levels. The 2004 APIS pointed out that poor families (the lowest 30 per cent of income strata) are more likely to have working children aged 5–17, with 23 per cent compared with 8 per cent among the non-poor families (higher 70 per cent of income strata). It was also noted that the incidence of working children increased from 20.7 per cent of families within the 30 per cent income stratum in 2002 to 23.1 per cent in 2004.