



ULANDSSEKRETARIATET – DTDA  
DANISH TRADE UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

# LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

# The Philippines

2025/2026

This profile brings insights and useful information of the labour market's structure, status, and challenges in the country.



## PREFACE

The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) is the development organisation of the Danish trade union movement. DTDA's work aligns with the International Labour Organization's global Decent Work Agenda (DWA), based on its four pillars: creating decent jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue. The overall development objective is to eradicate poverty and support the development of just and democratic societies by promoting the DWA.

The DTDA collaborates with trade union organisations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. The programmes' immediate objective is to assist the partner organisations in becoming change agents in their own national and regional labour market context, capable of achieving tangible improvements in the national DWA conditions and the labour-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Labour Market Profile (LMP) format is a comprehensive resource that offers a detailed overview of the structure, development, and challenges of the labour market. It covers key indicators such as unionism, social dialogue, bi-/tri-partite mechanisms, labour policy development, legal reforms status' compliance with international standards, just transition, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, providing a wealth of information for stakeholders.

This profile is prepared via national partner organisations that provide annual narrative progress reports as part of programme

implementation and monitoring. National statistical institutions and international databanks (e.g., ILOSTAT and NATLEX, World Bank Open Data, the U.S. Department of State, and other internationally recognised labour-related global indexes) are also used as sources of data and information.

The profile is regularly updated to reflect the latest developments. The current version spans from 2025 to 2026. Labour Market Profiles for more than 20 countries are available on DTDA's website, ensuring stakeholders have access to the most recent information:

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

The DTDA supports development programmes in the Philippines in collaboration with the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) from the Philippines.

If you have any comments about the profile, please contact Mr. Kasper Andersen ([kan@dtda.dk](mailto:kan@dtda.dk)) from DTDA.

The front-page photo is informal workers in the Philippines. The photo was taken by Mr. Jacob Rosdahl.

Address:  
Ulandssekretariatet  
Islands Brygge 32D  
DK-2300 Copenhagen S  
Denmark  
Telefon: +45 33 73 74 40  
<https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Philippines' economic growth rebounded after the COVID-19 impact and underwent a wave of liberalization that altered the employment landscape.** Structural shifts have led to progress in economic equality and poverty reduction, but they have halted in recent years, mirrored in stymied real wage hikes. The impacts of climate change push to sectoral ruptures in the labour market, bringing the just transition agenda a hotspot at the policy level and among social partners.

**The country's national compliance with the legal framework to protect workers' rights is at the medium level compared with neighbouring countries, and it lost pace in the freedom of association.** However, it is stuck among the ten worst countries in ranking for workers on the Global Rights Index, and free trade agreements do not positively influence workers' rights.

**Central labour-related tripartite institutions are functioning at the policy level, and social dialogue is taking some steps forward at the bilateral level.** The number of collective bargaining agreements is rising but are still challenged by very low coverage. The trade union density does not keep pace with the employment growth. The trade union movement is gradually becoming more coordinated and organised, benefiting from relatively calm industrial peace in recent years.

**There are positive shifts in the employment structure, reflected by more formal employees, and a slow drop among informal workers.** It is also visualised by falling workforce export, echoing in slowly reduced remittances inflow. The relatively low unemployment rate suggests that the economy is generating jobs but is somewhat

blindsided by a still large diaspora and substantial economically inactive population. An upsurge in child labour emerged as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, natural disasters, and conflicts, but it has been curbed. The Philippines is the only Asian country ranking among the top 20 countries in the latest Global Gender Gap Index and benefitting a relatively high proportion of women in managerial positions. Filipino youth are challenged by weak political and civic participation as well as employment and opportunity, which underscores the need for action to improve their situation.

**The Philippines falls behind in education compared with other regional countries, including many students skipping classes to find some income to support their families.** The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system was hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic and has yet to rebound fully, just as it continues to be an underdeveloped sector. Although projections suggest that the fourth industrial revolution will hit millions of Filipino workers hard, it currently runs as one of the top outsourcing destinations. The growing digital labour platforms are rearranging the already challenging employment shifts.

**Reshuffling the labour market model has led to worrisome social protection trends in recent years.** Filipino population covered by at least one social protection benefit fell and universal health service coverage go down. Although the social insurance programmes have low attention with leakage to the richest, some upsurges were detected, including the entrance of the unemployed receiving unemployment benefits with a relatively low coverage scale compared to the regional average.

## FACT SHEET

### Significant improvements

- Ratified the ILO Labour Inspection Convention (C081) and the Violence and Harassment Convention (C190), both in 2024.
- A milestone joint 15-Point Labour Agenda rolled out by the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU).
- The country has experienced a remarkable upsurge in the coverage of persons above retirement age receiving a pension but at a low allowance level.

### Social dialogue

- Social partners are active in tripartism via information sharing, consultations, fora, and dialogues, as well as strengthening bipartite relations to promote occupational safety and health (OSH) compliance at the enterprise level.
- The workers' rights to bargain collectively are strictly regulated.
- There is very low coverage of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) at the enterprise level, with a ratio of CBA coverage to employees about 1%.

### Main challenges

- Both climate change and 4IR are changing the labour market model and its demands, which critically need alignment via education and training.
- The TVET system faces an inward reflection and assessments to keep pace with the mounting labour market demands.
- The minimum wage growth does not follow the pace of labour productivity development.
- The ageing population brings mounting financial pressure on social protection and income tax revenue.

### Unionism

- The trade union membership rate increased by 12% from 2020 to 2024.
- The trade union density slowly fell, grasping 6.6% for employment in 2024.
- The trade union movement is gradually becoming more organised.
- Violations of trade union rights rank 5 of 5+ (from 1 to 5, 5 is the worst).

### The trade union movement's central issues that challenge the labour market and needs to improve:

- End all forms of contractualization and non-standard employment by pushing for a security of tenure law.
- Strengthen wage policies, especially for the low-wage sector.
- Create and preserve decent jobs.
- Fully realise freedom of association.
- Implement universal and adequate social security and (contributory and non-contributory) social protection for all.

### Workforce

- The working-age population is 77 million.
- Unemployment rate of 2.6%.
- The proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment is 36%.
- The child labour rate is 3.0%.
- Men and women employees share 63% and 37% of total employment, respectively.
- The education, employment, or training (NEET) rate of 13%.



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## ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

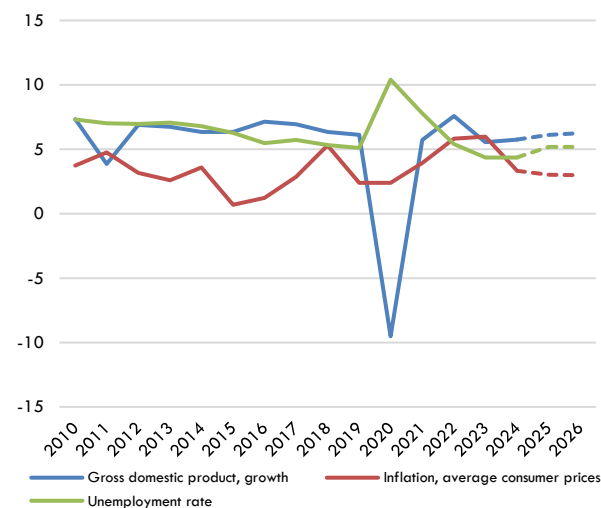
The Philippines is a dynamic economy, linked by a vibrant labour market, solid consumer demand and robust personnel remittances. The country is projected to move from a lower-middle-income country to an upper-middle-income country in 2025. The Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2023–2028 was prepared by social dialogue, setting ambitious goals, such as maintaining an annual economic growth rate between 6.5 to 8.0% from 2024 to 2028; create more, better, and more resilient jobs; keep food and overall prices low and stable; enforce fiscal discipline; transform the production sectors through innovation; all efforts are intended to improve the welfare of Filipinos significantly.

The steady high economic growth in the 2010s suddenly dived deeply in 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic: growth fell by seventeen percentage points, reaching -9.5%. This rupture cost US\$15 billion, and unemployment temporarily doubled. This situation led to drops in consumption, investments, and national savings, exacerbated by the sharp slowdown in exports and tourism. The policy framework supported the economy's resilience through government expenditure and debt hikes. Economic growth rapidly rebounded in 2021 and stayed in line with the MTPDP's threshold afterwards, benefitting a vibrant labour market and stable remittances inflow that continue to fuel robust household consumption (see more in Figure 1 and Appendix Table 2).

Consumer price inflation passed above 5% in 2022 and 2023, beyond the MTPDP threshold of 2.5% to 4.5%. This relatively high inflation brought pressure on public finances, and workers' income purchasing power deteriorated, echoed in drops in real minimum wages (see more in the Working Conditions

section). Projects suggest that inflation will fall to 3.0% from 2025 to 2026 (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Gross domestic product, inflation, and unemployment growth trends in the Philippines, %, 2010–2026**



Source: International Monetary Fund.

The Philippines' business regulations and labour market efficiency, detailed in Appendix Table 6 and Table 7, are relatively well-ranked. Labour productivity has been steadily rising, except for a dip in 2020, driven by advance in the service sector, supported by the ongoing recovery of the tourism sector and the consistent performance of the information technology and business process outsourcing industry. Instead, the industry sector slowly lost pace during the last decade. The agricultural sector also lost some value added by its producers but continues hovering above the regional average. Overall, the labour productivity gap is widening to the regional average, landing by half lower than the Eastern Asia average.

The Philippines implements a progressive personal income tax rate of up to 35%. A challenge of generating government revenue via the income tax is the widespread informal economy (see more in the Informal Economy sub-section). Also, labour tax and contributions

paid by businesses at 8.9% of commercial profits is lower than the regional average.<sup>1</sup>

The country has experienced an increase in the labour income share in GDP, grasping 45% since 2021, but remains seven percentage points below the regional average. Notably, the labour income share primarily focuses on formal employees, excluding the self-employed, who comprise 37% of the Philippines' total employment. The country also experienced a steady decrease in economic inequality during the last decade, suggesting that workers' income growth keeps pace with labour productivity. However, the country remains one of the most unequal countries in the region. Other data show that poverty headcount as a percentage of the population significantly fell during the 2010s but deteriorated real hikes in minimum wages at the end of that decade along with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic triggered a slight poverty upsurge, reaching 18% of the population in 2021.<sup>2</sup>

### **Just Transition**

The Philippines is in the Tropical Cyclone belt and the Pacific Ring of Fire, placing it among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Climate-related and geological hazards are reflected in around 20 tropical cyclones yearly, and seismic shocks frequently occur.

National authorities argue that the impacts of climate change are immense, including annual losses in GDP, changes in rainfall patterns and distribution, droughts, threats to biodiversity and food security, sea level rise, and public health risks.<sup>3</sup> Studies suggest that the country stands to lose 6% of its GDP annually by 2100 if it disregards climate change risks, as well as climate change-induced heat in the workplace

is projected to render 1% loss in working hours by 2025, 2% by 2050, and 4% by 2085.<sup>4</sup>

Changes in Filipino workers' daily lives in the increasing temperatures resonate throughout deteriorating working conditions, especially those who stay outside – such as in agriculture, construction, and some public services. For example, in 2024, the country experienced a heat wave within the “danger” classification, affecting areas to adapt asynchronous learning, i.e., where students can study at home with the guidance of their teachers using the Internet.<sup>5</sup> Regarding the scope of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from disasters, see more in the Migration sub-section.

The tripartite nature of the social dialogue has provided platforms for bringing in the current broad legal and policy framework to tackle the climate challenges, including the Philippine Green Jobs Act of 2016. This latter act promotes the creation of “green jobs” and employment that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment. It is particularly in the agriculture sector where many workers shift out of agriculture, which could negatively affect food security and economic productivity. For instance, the agriculture and forestry industry lost at least 500,000 workers in 2022 due to climate changes, population growth, diminishing farm size and declining incomes.<sup>6</sup> In 2024, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has intensified its efforts to promote “green jobs” at the regional level, aligning education and training with industry needs, particularly in growing sectors, such as renewable energy, construction, manufacturing, transport, sustainable agriculture, and ecotourism.

The National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028 sets government action to address climate change within food security, water

sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and knowledge and capacity development. Some of the changes in progress are characterised by diesel-powered jeepney public transport trucks, a widely used and cheap form of transport in cities in the Philippines, which are under modernisation to reduce their carbon emission and improve urban air quality. It has brought unmanageable costs that could upend the livelihood of about 180,000 traditional jeepney drivers, as they face a looming deadline to modernise their fleets due to weak subsidy of the total cost of the modern jeepney. The legal reform did not support mechanisms to help drivers with the costs of replacing their vehicles, and many drivers feared for their livelihoods. This stance triggered nationwide strikes and protests by jeepney drivers, who labelled the jeepney modernisation programme ‘anti-poor’ and demanded financial assistance for a just transition.

The Philippines signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2016 and is committed to its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Ambitiously, it aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors by increasing the national carbon intensity reduction target to 75% in 2030, of which 2.7% is unconditional, and 72% is conditional, which is focused on the agriculture, waste, industry, transport, and energy sectors.<sup>7</sup>

A landmark project will accelerate the transition from coal to clean energy, and there has been a moratorium on new coal plants since 2020. So far, the Philippines’ share of coal in electricity generation has continued to rise despite the target to cut dependence on this fuel to less than half of total power output by 2030. Currently, policymakers are working on the draft Energy Transition Act, which creates

an Energy Transition Plan to phase out fossil fuel plants and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The Philippines has demonstrated advanced engagement in Just Transition, emphasising social dialogue and collaboration with the Department of Energy to develop inclusive policies. In October 2024, a group of central organised employers and workers in the Philippines signed a historic pact on transitioning to a low-carbon economy.<sup>8</sup> Local unions also have successfully integrated Just Transition provisions into collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), ensuring fair retrenchment policies and training for new job roles.<sup>9</sup>

### Export Processing Zones

The application of special economic zones (SEZs) has been transformed over the past decades and linked with an industrial policy and a long-term plan known as AmBisyon Natin 2040. SEZs have changed from government-controlled export processing zones (EPZs) to more liberal economic zones, including private participation and a broad spectrum of economic activities. The Philippines’ government is attempting to gear up to compete with other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) manufacturing hotspots to grab a share of foreign investment.

In 2023, there were 419 registered SEZs, and of these, 297 were information technology parks and centres, 78 were manufacturing ecozones, 24 were agro-industrial ecozones, 17 were tourism ecozones, and three were medical tourism ecozones.<sup>10</sup> The number of SEZs have been on the rise, mainly in information technology parks and manufacturing economic zones, and many new and expansion projects are in the pipeline. The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) statistics indicated a rising employment trend in ecozones over the past decades, from around 92,000 in 1994 to

a peak in 2022 with almost 1.9 million workers, even nearly double the initial figure of 909,266 in 2012.<sup>11</sup> SEZs' employment share of all employees increased from 4.3% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2022.

A complete overview of trade unions in SEZs is scarce, but a study listed 20 registered unions or unions organised in two ecozones (Cavite and Mactan). Only five have concluded CBAs (all from Cavite); no union with a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) presently exists in Mactan. While most factories being organised are in the garments industry, none of these have reached maturity as sole and exclusive bargaining agents with a CBA.<sup>12</sup>

Reports noted that unions continue to claim that local political leaders and officials who governed the SEZs explicitly attempted to frustrate union organising efforts by maintaining union-free or strike-free policies. Unions further argued the government stationed security forces near industrial areas or SEZs to intimidate workers trying to organise and alleged that companies in the zones used frivolous lawsuits to harass union leaders. Local zone directors claim exclusive authority to conduct their inspections as part of the zones' privileges intended by the legislature. Employers controlled hiring through special zone labour centres. For these reasons, and in part due to organisers' restricted access to the closely guarded zones and the propensity among zone establishments to adopt fixed-term, casual, temporary, or seasonal employment contracts, unions had little success organising in the SEZs.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the dispute resolution mechanisms of the Department of Labour and Employment (DoLE) has been unable to effectively stop employers from their interference in SEZ workers exercising their right to join or form a union and to concerted action against employer abuse.

In 2021, the NAGKAISA statement manifested strong opposition to the creation of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the PEZA Joint Alliance for Industrial Peace and Programme Office (AIPPO), which was seen as restricting further trade union organising in the country's ecozones. Creating the AIPPO responded to the workers' strong objections to JIPCO.

## LABOUR LEGISLATION

The Philippines' industrial relations are linked with ten primary laws (see Appendix Table 3). In recent years, the policymakers have enacted several new legislations that are expected to boost private investment and enhance the country's attractiveness as an investment destination.<sup>14</sup>

The Philippines' 1987 Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of association, but it is strictly regulated. The constitution ensures that workers are protected and aims to promote the shared responsibility of workers and employers in settling disputes. Women workers' maternal function and full employment are also a part of the constitution.

The Labour Code of 1974 governs the Philippines' employment practices and labour relations. The code prohibits anti-union discrimination and recognises the right to collective bargaining. It allows all workers to form and join independent unions, except military, police, and short-term employees. The right to strike is also acknowledged but strictly regulated; for instance, strikes organised by trade unions are allowed if most members approve them and give an approved period of notice.

Social protection legislation outlines social security obligations for Philippine employers

and their employees. To extend social protection to workers in the informal economy, the National Health Insurance Act of 2013 (RA 10606) mandates the enrolment of workers to access health benefits, which is financially linked with PhilHealth (see more in the Social Protection section).

The Domestic Workers Act of 2013 has institutionalised several policies concerning protecting and improving working conditions for Filipino workers. The act has approved rights and benefits, including daily and weekly rest, 13th-month pay, coverage under social security schemes, regional minimum monthly wages, and employee certificates.

### Observations on Labour Legislation

Concerning the labour legislation applicable at the national level, the Philippines's overall score on the Labour Rights Index is 68 out of 100 in 2024, slightly better than the regional average observed across South-Eastern Asia (65) (see more in Appendix Table 8). It is worth noting that the country experienced a negative score adjustment in the freedom of association indicator; for instance, a trade union must demonstrate majority support in a bargaining unit for engaging in collective bargaining.<sup>15</sup>

Generally, although laws and regulations provide for the right to organise and bargain collectively in both the private sector and in corporations owned or controlled by the government, workers face several challenges in exercising their rights in the Philippines. For instance, it is prohibited for foreign nationals or migrant workers to organise unions unless a reciprocity agreement exists with the workers' countries of origin specifying that migrant workers from the Philippines were permitted to organise unions there. Temporary or outsourced workers and workers without employment

contracts are also barred from joining a union. Legislation requires the participation of 20% of the employees in the bargaining unit where the union sought to operate. More details of legal observations are available in Appendix Table 4).<sup>16</sup>

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

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

The widespread informal economy also haunts the coverage of labour-related laws. This situation leads employers and workers to use loopholes in business and labour regulations, often due to a lack of awareness or incentives. The Informal Economy sub-section provides more details.

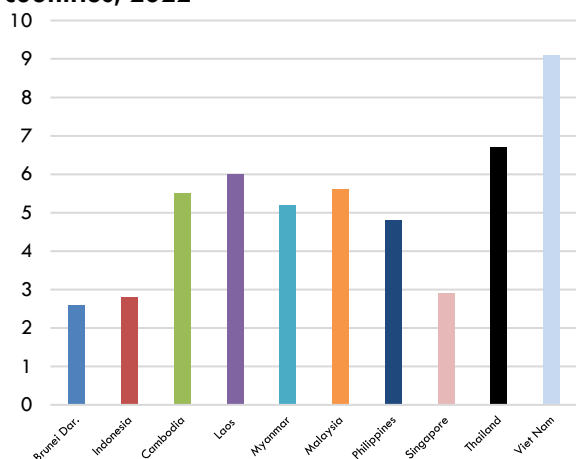
### Ratified ILO Conventions

International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions enumerate international principles and rights at work. Appendix Table 5 shows that nine out of ten Fundamental Conventions and three of four Governance Conventions have been ratified, and 29 of 177 Technical Conventions are up-to-date and actively promoted. The latest ratified conventions are the Labour Inspection Convention (C081) and

the Violence and Harassment Convention (C190), both from 2024.

The Sustainable Development Goals indicator 8.8.2 measures compliance with fundamental labour rights. Based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, the Philippines' scoring has recently marginally deteriorated. Still, it is better on margin than the ASEAN countries' average (see more details in Figure 2). This trend suggests the country is losing pace with the specific SDG goal.

**Figure 2: Level of national compliance with labour rights among the Philippines and ASEAN countries, 2022**



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

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

The ILO's independent supervisory system body, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), has many observations and direct requests for conventions. For instance, in 2024, the CEACR had observations of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (C087) dealing with continued and serious violations of workers' civil liberties and freedom of association rights, as well as a tripartite roadmap to implement the 2019

Conference Committee conclusions and achieve full compliance with the Convention.<sup>17</sup> The committee had also direct request of the Tripartite Consultation Convention (C144) regarding procedures that ensure effective tripartite consultations with representative organizations of employers and workers (see more in the Central Tripartite Institutions sub-section).<sup>18</sup>

## Trade Agreements

The Philippines has signed eight free trade agreements (FTAs). Six FTAs are via the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), representing ten member countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam – so far, signed with Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand. Two bilateral FTAs are the Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (PJEPA), initiated in 2008, and the EFTA States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland – launched in 2018. Except for the two bilateral FTAs and the ASEAN-New Zealand FTA, which included a memorandum of agreement on labour cooperation, the other FTAs do not have labour provisions.<sup>19</sup> These two bilateral FTAs do not include enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. Other broader trade agreements with the European Union's GSP+ have been more marginal, with no labour provisions.

Considering the level of national compliance with labour rights (revisit Figure 2) suggests that the Philippines' RTAs with labour provisions have a meagre impact on improving workers' rights.

## SOCIAL PARTNERS

Social partners are central to promoting the realisation of core labour rights and social justice for workers by protecting freedom of association and collective bargaining. These organisations are usually represented as the government, trade unions, and employers' organisations.

### Government

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

The Department of Labour and Employment (DoLE) is the regulatory entity. It administers and enforces the Labour Code and is empowered to issue rules and regulations on employment matters. The DoLE has the authority to enforce laws on freedom of association and collective bargaining. The institution publishes annual Labour Relations Overview reports following statistical trends concerning unions, collective bargaining, the Labour Management Council, industrial action, the single-entry approach programme, and social dialogue. It is further a part of central agencies such as the Employee's Compensation Commission, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the National Conciliation and Mediation Board, the Institute for Labour Studies, the National Labour Relations Commission, the Occupational Safety and Health Centre, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, the Professional Regulation Commission, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the National Maritime Polytechnic.

The DoLE coordinates the investigation, prosecution, and resolution of cases alleging violence and harassment of labour leaders and trade union activists pending before the ILO.

The Bureau of Labour Relations (BLR) is part of the DoLE and publishes regular statistical reports about the number of registered labour organizations, workers' associations, and existing collective bargaining agreements (CBA). The bureau also coordinates with four committees on rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialogue.

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

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

### Trade Unions

In the Philippines, workers' organisations are part of the tripartite structure that promotes labour standards in the country. Their role in advocating workers' rights and ratifying and enforcing international labour conventions has been crucial.

Unionism is linked with a "state-centric" labour relations system that focuses on the policies and principles of labour protectionism. This system has been challenged by the modernisation process, particularly in terms of responding to a more globalised, liberalised, technology-

driven, and market-oriented economic system.<sup>20</sup>

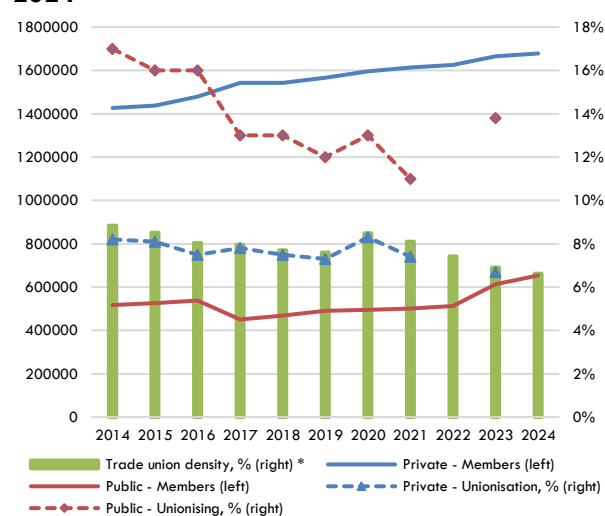
Organised workers in the Philippines can be divided into i) the public sector, ii) the private sector, including enterprise-based unions, and iii) workers' associations (informal sector). Appendix Table 9 shows the status of registered labour organisations in 2023, representing 146,909, with a total membership of almost 6.3 million workers in 2024. The organised workers' groups represent a membership share of 10%, 27%, and 63%, respectively (see more in Appendix Table 11). The two largest trade union federations in terms of the volume of members are the Philippine Trade and General Workers Organization (PTGWO) and Associated Labour Unions (ALU) (see more details in Appendix Table 10).<sup>21</sup>

Figure 3 shows membership of formal trade unions (excluding workers' associations) rising in both the private and public sectors. The latter plummeted in 2017, but it rebounded, especially in local government units, attempting to end the controversial non-standard or end-of-contract ("endo") model. In 2023, membership finally superseded the previous peak in 2016.

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

Overall, the upsurge in trade union membership rates is not keeping pace with the growing employee group, signalling a declining trade union density rate despite an upturn in the public sector in 2023, reaching 6.6% of employees in 2024, which is at least half of OECD average at about 16% (revisit Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Trade union members and unionisation rate in the Philippines, private and public, 2014-2024**



\* Ratio of aggregated public and private trade union members to employees.

Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, Statistical Reports.

The trade union movement in the Philippines has been fragmented, mostly due to differences in leaders' personalities and ideological thinking. It is gradually becoming more organised. The latest conglomeration of trade unions, born out of a united trade union representation to the ILO High-Level Tripartite Mission in January 2023, is the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU) composed of the NAGKAISA ("united") labour coalition counting 49 trade unions and the KMU (see also Appendix Table 14). The NAGKAISA operates with a loose organisational structure. It involves themes including minimum wage taxation and institutionalising core labour standards in the agro-industrial plan. Other formations exist, but data are scarce.

In November 2022, 45 trade unions, workers' organisations, labour federations, workers' associations, labour research centres and civil society organisations developed and signed a 15-point Labour Agenda with five priority areas: i) end all forms of contractualization and non-standard employment by pushing for a security of tenure law, ii) strengthen wage policies, especially for the low wage sector, iii)



create and preserve decent jobs, iv) fully realise freedom of association, and v) implement universal and adequate social security and (contributory and non-contributory) social protection for all.<sup>22</sup>

Trade unions often operate with gender and youth policies.<sup>23</sup> Other unionism facts, outlined by the latest available national Integrated Survey on Labour and Employment, are summarised below:<sup>24</sup>

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

### Employers' Organisations

Estimates suggest that about 2.8% of the total employment in the Philippines represented employers in 2022, which is lower than the Eastern Asia & Pacific average at approximately 3.5%.<sup>25</sup>

Based on the latest Global Risks Report 2024, identified by the Philippines Executive Opinion Survey, the five risks that are the most likely to pose the biggest threat to the country in the next two years are extreme weather events, economic downturn, energy supply shortage, inflation, and infectious diseases.<sup>26</sup>

The Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is recognised as the single voice of employers' organisations to be consulted by the government and organised labour.<sup>27</sup> ECOP is a member of the ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

The confederation's members are primarily individual corporations and other business membership organisations. It delivers services in training, education, and development programmes.<sup>28</sup> The Technical Working Group (TWG) on labour and social policy issues is a forum to discuss pending labour policy and bills that will ensure the incorporation of various industry groups and foreign chambers' views.

ECOP promotes the e-Campus, a learning management system (LMS) offering courses and programmes either fully online or through a blended approach. This system offers 60 courses, and the number of training services per week has increased rapidly. In June 2024, the organisation raised concerns that the state of education has become a cause for concern, citing that one of the major contributors to the problem is the lack of budget allocated by the government to the sector (see more in the Education section).

Other topics emerged in 2024, including the fact that ECOP did not agree with a proposed law that would oblige private companies to hire persons with disabilities (PWDs). They also urged its members to keep up with artificial intelligence (AI)-driven technology and continue to reskill and upskill their workforce to support the country's economic growth (see more in the Fourth Industrial Revolution sub-section).

## SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The Philippines has ratified central ILO conventions involving social dialogue (revisit Appendix Table 5) and supported by the national legal framework, covering ten pieces of legislation consisting of acts, executive orders, and DoLE Department Orders, not to mention a declared state policy in the Labour Code.<sup>29</sup>

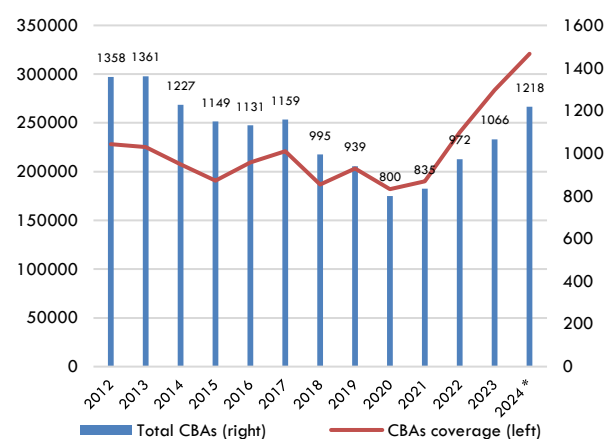
The scope of the social dialogue is determined by the number of workers organised, the number of collective bargaining agreements concluded, and how labour education services are being extended in the Philippines. It links with the labour relations system, which encourages less adversarial modes of settling disputes and ensures the speedy disposition of labour cases.

On the positive side, social partners are active in tripartism via information sharing, consultations, fora, and dialogues, as well as strengthening bipartite relations, including to promote occupational safety and health (OSH) compliance at the enterprise level.

On the negative side, although the Labour Code encapsulates workers' rights to bargain collectively, they are strictly regulated (revisit Appendix Table 4). This situation is echoed in the very low coverage of collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). In the private sector, CBAs are not practised at the national level. Instead, they are bargained between management and federated unions at the enterprise level. Figure 4 shows that the number of CBAs declined during the late 2010s but rebounded at the beginning of the 2020s. The ratio of CBA coverage to employees was about 1%, indicating that it remains a very underdeveloped labour market area. In contrast, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

average collective bargaining coverage was 32%. Even the Philippines' latest 2019/2020 Integrated Survey on Labour and Employment registered a CBA coverage of 6.3%, with around 330,000 workers being covered.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 4: Collective Bargaining Agreements and coverage in the Philippines, 2012-2024**



\* As of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2024.

Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview.

In the Philippines, not all terms and conditions of employment of public sector employees can be negotiated under the collective negotiations agreement (CNA) (collective bargaining). Public sector unions' CNAs are registered with the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The CSC is the government's overall personnel department dealing with government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCC). There were 219 GOCCs as of 2022; both receive subsidies and pay dividends to the national government.<sup>31</sup> Some unions in the public sector were creative to include demands, called "Salary Extenders" interpreted as savings such as requesting for shuttle busses, free drinking fountains and mineral water, provision of coffee and others. They also managed to request the use of public lands for the union's livelihood projects.

Skills development is rarely mentioned in collective bargaining agreements and only at the regional level. These agreements are minor inclusions of 'skills training' and job enrichment

under ‘productivity enhancement’. Studies revealed that trade union involvement has waned in the country since unions’ interest and participation in skills development has not been as strong as their interest in promoting union organisation, collective bargaining and protecting workers’ rights.<sup>32</sup>

The widespread informal economy and the dominance of micro and small enterprises in the private sector continue challenging the scope of collective bargaining.

### Central tripartite institutions

Different consultation tripartite bodies aim to promote social dialogue in the Philippines and meet regularly (see more details in Appendix Table 13). The status of the leading active institutions is summarised below:

#### National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council

The National Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (NTIPC) is the primary consultative body for tripartite consultation between the government, employer, and workers regarding labour, employment, and social policies at the national level. The council must formulate tripartite views, recommendations, and proposals on labour and economic and social concerns for submission to the president or Congress. TIPCs have also set up tripartite industry councils at regional, provincial, municipal and industry levels (automotive, banking, construction, clothing and textile, hotel and restaurant, sugar, and maritime). The public sector union representatives to the 14 Regional Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (RTIPC) must be appointed solely from PUBLIK nominees.

In recent years, NTIPC reached several accomplishments, including adopting the Labour and Employment Plan (LEP) 2023-2028, approving Resolution No. 3 series of 2023,

“Adopting the Tripartite Roadmap on Freedom of Association, and Expressing Commitment to Work toward its Realization”; tackling the National Occupational Safety and Health Strategy 2024-2028.

#### National Industry Tripartite Council

The DoLE chairs the National Industry Tripartite Council (NITC) and is comprised of workers’ and employers’ representatives, as the industry’s needs may require.

The Bureau of Labour Relations (BLR) coordinates with the regional or local TIPCs and industry tripartite councils (ITCs). A regional or local ITC consistently respects local autonomy, and the governor or mayor in the local unit concerned must be given priority in heading the ITC. An ITC comprises regional or local industry representatives from the workers’ and employers’ sectors and other government agencies directly involved with the specific industry.<sup>33</sup> Generally, there are registered eight sectoral national ITCs: Automotive Assembly ITC, Banking ITC, Clothing and Textile, Construction ITC, Hotel and Restaurant Consultative Tripartite Board, Sugar Tripartite Council, Private Security ITC, and Education ITC.<sup>34</sup> Some ITCs meet every month, while others have agreed to meet bi-monthly or quarterly.

#### Public Sector Labour Management Council

The Public Sector Labour Management Council (PSLMC) is a consultative and advisory mechanism lodged with the DoLE. The expansion of membership in the PSLMC allows elected sectoral representatives to participate during the deliberation of policies on public sector unionism at the level of the PSLMC-Technical Working Group. However, the members of the PSLMC are exclusively government representatives, while representatives of public servants’ organisations do not have a right to vote in its

discussions and deliberations and can only participate during PSLMC deliberations.<sup>35</sup>

### **Labour dispute resolution system**

The Labour Code in the Philippines subjects all problems affecting labour and employment to mandatory mediation-conciliation. The DoLE provides mediation services through the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) with regional branches through the Labour Management Council (LMC). The NCMB also mediates and arbitrates between labour and management, including disputes concerning strikes and lockouts, which are only possible if they are related to violations of unfair labour practice, a collective bargaining deadlock or a gross violation of collective bargaining laws.

Appendix Table 12 shows that preventive mediation cases slowed down during the early 2020s compared to the late 2010s. Instead, the average duration to settle increased. In February 2024, the NCMB argued they translated to a 43% settlement rate of all current conciliation cases with some benefits from voluntary arbitration, grievance system, and the Single-Entry Approach (SEnA) programme.<sup>36</sup>

The SEnA was institutionalised to de-judicial the dispute-settlement procedures and foster fair, speedy and inexpensive labour justice. The SEnA provides a 30-day mandatory conciliation-mediation service on all individual and collective labour and employment disputes as the first approach. The programme aims to reduce the number of assumptions of jurisdiction cases and cases certified for compulsory arbitration. It is interesting to note that demand for SEnA services was high at the end of the 2010s. It landed low at the beginning of the 2020s due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, demand for SEnA services has

drastically increased. Requests for Assistance under the SEnA Programme have totalled 93,364 in 2023 with a national settlement rate of 67%.<sup>37</sup>

If mediation fails, the union may issue a strike notice. Parties may bring any dispute to mediation, but strikes or lockouts must be related to acts of unfair labour practice, a gross violation of collective bargaining laws, or a collective bargaining deadlock. The legislation permits employers to dismiss union officers who knowingly participate in an illegal strike. The DoLE claims that the incidence of strikes has continually dropped during the last decade. Strikes/lockout cases fell at the beginning of the 2020s; a relatively stable industrial peace was maintained, three work stoppages were declared, and 283 workers were involved in 2023.<sup>38</sup>

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

## TRADE UNION RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The Philippines is among the ten worst countries for workers, ranked 5 out of 5+ (5+ is the worst) on the Global Rights Index in 2024, which has haunted the country in recent years. This stance represents “no guarantee of rights”: While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices.<sup>39</sup>

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) argued that workers and their representatives in the Philippines remain particularly vulnerable to violent attacks, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests. Trade unionists have been haunted by maliciously being blacklisted by the government as a communist subversive and branded an extremist, kept under immediate threat from the police and the army, which has conducted targeted raids against unionists. Over 50 trade unionists have been killed since 2016; strikes have led to the prosecution of union leaders; many union representatives were illegally arrested and detained. This situation has fuelled a climate of fear and persecution, silencing the collective voice of workers. Workers across many sectors still faced significant obstacles when attempting to form trade unions.<sup>40</sup>

The ITUC listed specific cases of trade union rights violations dealing with, for example, pasta workers arrested for going on strike; harassment of unions involved in the Coca-Cola dispute; education unionists targeted; trade unions still targeted in intimidatory “red-tagging” campaign.<sup>41</sup>

A total of 33 Freedom of Association cases were registered by the ILO’s complaints procedures register: one case is active and

confidential, five cases are listed as a follow-up, and 27 are closed.<sup>42</sup> The active case concerns the complainant organisation, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), alleged the extrajudicial killings of three trade union leaders and denounced the failure of the government to investigate these cases and bring the perpetrators to justice adequately. The complainants further allege the use of threats and murder attempts against a fourth trade union leader and his family, who have been forced into hiding and denounce the government’s failure to adequately investigate this case and protect the victims. The failure to investigate and prosecute in these cases would have reinforced the climate of impunity, violence and insecurity with its damaging effect on the exercise of trade union rights.

Workers face several challenges in exercising their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Some employers have reportedly chosen to employ workers who could not legally organise, such as short-term contracts and foreign national workers, to minimise unionisation and avoid other rights accorded to “regular” workers. The non-governmental Centre for Trade Union and Human Rights contended that this practice led to declining unions and the number of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements. Employers also often abuse contract labour provisions by rehiring employees shortly after the expiration of the previous contract. The Department of Labour has reported multiple cases of workers alleging employers refuse to bargain.<sup>43</sup>

The high-ranking workers’ Global Rights Index links to a severe violation of the right to free speech and assembly related to violent suppression of popular dissent. The stance was likely to worsen for workers as the Anti-Terrorism Act, which came into force in July

2020, granted even more extended powers to the police and the military to attack and harass workers and trade union activists.

The Philippines has ratified the central international conventions of abolition of forced labour and domestic workers, and the Labour Code prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labour. However, forced labour is still applied in practice in the country. This issue is mainly in fishing and other maritime industries, gold mines, debt bondage agriculture, and other areas of the informal economy, including domestic service, forced begging, and small factories. Trade unions reported that continued poor compliance with the law was partly due to the government's lack of capacity to inspect labour practices in the informal economy.<sup>44</sup>

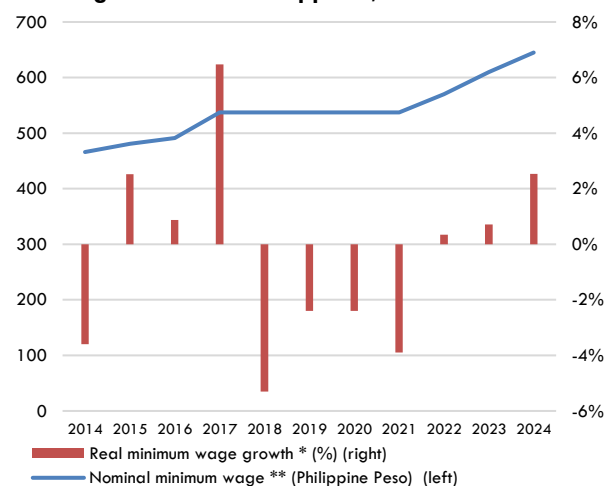
Crises heighten the risk of all forms of modern slavery, and climate crisis has accelerated these circumstances. About 859,000 people were living in modern slavery in the Philippines, with a prevalence of 7.8 per 1,000 of the population and ranking as number 7 out of 27 Asia and the Pacific countries on the Global Slavery Index (1 is the worst score) in 2023.<sup>45</sup> This index measures modern slavery, i.e., slavery-like practices (such as debt, bondage, forced marriage and sale or exploitation of children), human trafficking and forced labour.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

The Philippines' government controls and regulates the minimum wage. No workers should be paid less than the minimum wage, and employers who do not pay salaries according to the minimum wage can be fined. The minimum wage system is complex and varies by region and industry. In every region, tripartite regional wage boards set the minimum wages.

The latest adjustments to minimum wage adjustments in the seventeen regions were made in July 2024. These diverge significantly from the highest minimum wage in non-agricultural Philippine Peso (PP) 645 per day (US\$11.3) in the National Capital Region (NCR) to the lowest in several regions with PP 400 (US\$7.0). Figure 5 shows that the real minimum wage (nominal deducted for inflation) deteriorated from 2018 to 2021 due to stalled minimum wage adjustments and the Covid-19 pandemic's negative impact, holding out workers' income purchasing power and living conditions, bringing many balancing on the poverty line. On the positive side, real minimum wage adjustments have rebounded since 2022.

**Figure 5: Nominal minimum wage per day trend and its real growth in the Philippines, 2014-2024**



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

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

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

The country is in the middle of gross monthly minimum wage levels in Asia and the Pacific. The minimum wage level has been relative to the median wage, at about 86%. Estimations suggest that the Philippines' annualised productivity growth was 6.1% from 2020 to 2024 while real minimum wage growth was down by -2.7%, pointing to the fact that the

minimum wage hikes are not keeping pace with productivity development.

The wage and work hours law does not cover a broad group of workers. First, wage boards exempted certain employers such as distressed establishments, new business enterprises, retail and service establishments with fewer than ten employees, and establishments affected by natural calamities. This situation is also reflected in the weak CBA coverage (revisit Figure 4). Second, the widespread informal economy creates loopholes in labour regulations, including minimum wage, often due to a lack of awareness or incentives.

Domestic workers are protected by the Kasambahay Law (Magna Carta for Domestic Workers), which entitles household workers to rights linked with other laws. They work under a different wage and benefit system that lays out minimum wage requirements. It is notably lower than regular minimum wage requirements, payments into social welfare programmes are lower and mandates only one day off a week. Official data are scarce, but reports suggest that two million or more persons are employed as domestic workers, with nearly 85% being women or girls, some as young as age 15.<sup>46</sup> Organising domestic workers are functioning in the Domestic Workers Union and the United Domestic Workers of the Philippines, among others.

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

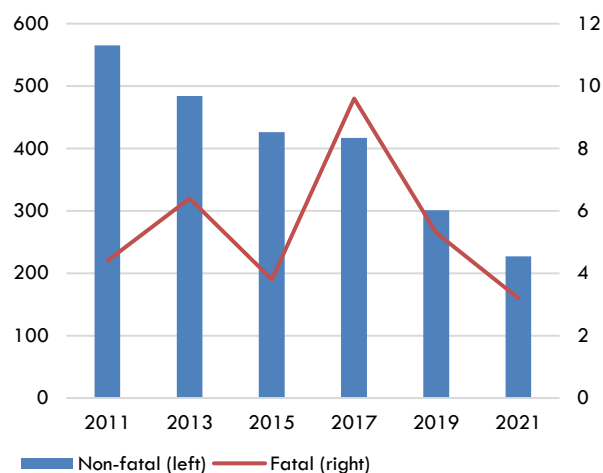
2018, prohibiting any contracting or subcontracting arrangement to circumvent the workers’ right to security of tenure, self-organisation, collective bargaining, and peaceful concerted activities. It was not until December 1, 2021, that the Security of Tenure Law, known as the End Endo Law, was passed by both houses of Congress. However, the bill was vetoed by then-President Duterte amidst protests from different labour unions calling to end contractualization. A new bill, the Civil Service Security of Tenure Act of 2023, was filed in the Senate. The bill seeks to amend the Labour Code, prohibiting labour-only contracting under the law but permitting legitimate job hiring and fixed-term employment for all government casual and contractual employees. Representations from the Philippines’ trade union movement criticised the bill because it provides dodges for the abusive practices of employers, who would still be allowed to hire relievers, project workers, and seasonal employees.<sup>47</sup>

The number of labour inspectors in the Philippines rose at the beginning of the 2020s, landing with 1,210 deployed nationwide, supporting increased inspection compliance. However, micro and small-sized enterprises and activities in the informal economy are exempt from inspections. The coverage was estimated at around one inspector per 26,000 employees (or one per 42,000 of total employment) in 2023. The ILO is concerned if the ratio exceeds one inspector per 20,000 workers in transition economies.<sup>48</sup>

The Workmen’s Compensation Act and the benefits granted by the Employees Compensation Commission cover public and private sector employees and their dependents in the event of work-connected contingencies. Figure 6 shows that registered cases of non-fatal and fatal occupational injuries have

experienced a declining trend in recent years. These data suggest that the Philippines is taking some steps ahead for the specific SDG goal of promoting safe and secure working environments for all workers.

**Figure 6: Non-fatal and fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers in the Philippines, 2011-2021**



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

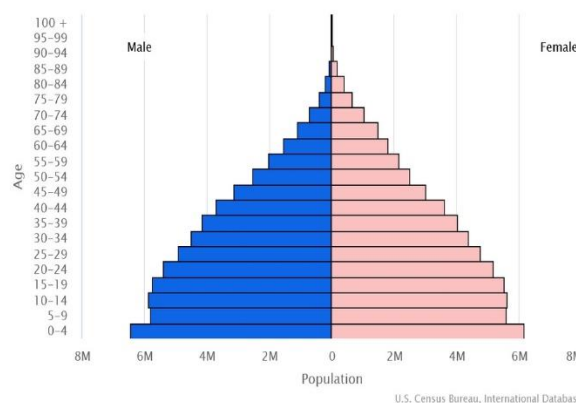
## WORKFORCE

The Philippines' demographic landscape demonstrates slowly decelerated population growth, but it remains slightly faster than the Eastern Asia & Pacific regional average. It landed with 117 million in 2023, jumping by 51% (at least 39 million) since 2000, ranking number 14 in the World's list of countries by population.

The country has a relatively young population with a characteristic wide-based population pyramid (see Figure 7). However, the country entered an initial stage, transforming the population structure by age with a drop in dependence ratio, known as the 'demographic dividend'. On the other hand, the country also faces an ageing population, supported by a slowly upsurge in life expectancy. This situation fosters looming challenges of an ageing population, like other Asian economies, with

mounting financial pressure on social protection such as health and eldercare pensions. Projections suggest that the share of elderly population (60+) in the country rises from 8.5% in 2020 to 11% in 2030.<sup>49</sup>

**Figure 7: Population pyramid based on the Age-Sex structure of the population in the Philippines, 2023**



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, The World Factbook, Philippines, November 2024.

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

The main trends of the Philippines' workforce are summarised below, and other facts are available in Appendix Table 15:

- Employment-to-population ratio fell by five percentage points from 2019 to 2020 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic but rebounded swiftly, landing at three out of five (60%) in 2022.
- The number of employed grew by 22% during the last decade.
- During the last decade, employment tipped the balance towards urban compared with rural areas, reaching 52% vs 48%, respectively.
- The status in employment structure has gained more weight on employees, while



the number of self-employed is dwindling, grasping 63% vs 37% in 2022.

- Employment in the agricultural sector fell by 13% during the last decade, losing at least 1.6 million workers, while the industry sector, and especially the service sector, is gaining more attention.
- Employment in the public sector rose by one percentage point, reaching 9.1% of total employment in 2022, while the private sector, which micro and small enterprises dominate, represents 91%.
- Output per worker is increasing but is superseded by a widening gap with the average for South-Eastern Asia.
- Labour income share as a per cent of GDP is slowly rising but faces a five-percentage point gap to the regional average.
- Increases in manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment has been stalled during the last decade.

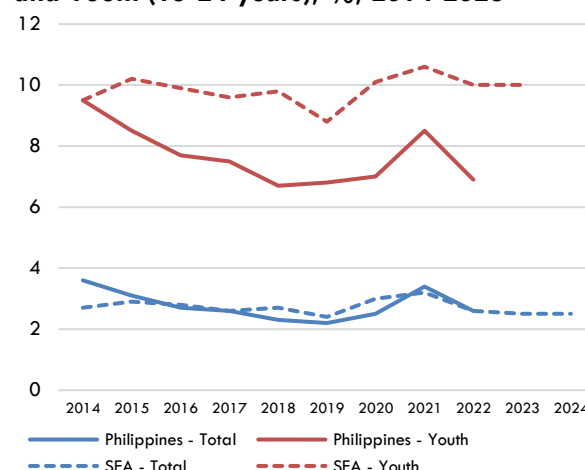
## Unemployment

The Philippines' low unemployment rate has followed the regional average trend during the last decade, including an upsurge in 2021 due to the global Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 8 below). This relatively low unemployment rate suggests that the Philippines' economy is generating jobs. It is worth mentioning that the relatively low unemployment rate has been supported by export of workers (see more in the Migration sub-section). Unemployment is predominantly an urban phenomenon, affecting the youth and those with higher education levels.

The unemployment rate underestimates that many individuals are engaged in casual or informal activities, many working a few hours per week as a survival strategy. In addition, the intermittent nature of subsistence farming occupied only during planting and harvesting,

contributes to what is known as 'disguised' unemployment. Unemployment is further statistically a part of the employed group, excluding people outside the workforce. Approximately 39% of the working-age population in the Philippines is estimated to be 'economically inactive', a term that masks a potential for unemployment. These aspects could give a more accurate picture of the real unemployment rate (see more in the Youth sub-section).

**Figure 8: Unemployment rate in the Philippines and South-Eastern Asia (SEA) average, Total and Youth (15-24 years), %, 2014-2023**



Source: International Labour Organization, LFS - Labour Force Survey.

The social protection system promotes unemployment benefit schemes, such as a cash benefit granted to covered employees, including domestic workers (Kasambahays) and Overseas Filipino Workers who are involuntarily separated from employment and have satisfied the eligibility requirements. Data show that the number of unemployed Filipinos receiving unemployment benefits increased from 0% in 2019 to 5.6% in 2021 (see more in the Social Protection section).

## Migration

The Philippines has ratified international conventions, including two of four ILO migrant-

specific instruments (C097 and C143, revisit Appendix Table 5). The national legal framework for migration covers several laws, including the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act. Migration issues have been mainstreamed in the Philippine Development Plans, focusing on ensuring safe and orderly overseas migration. The protection of migrants, the mandate of several Philippine agencies for decades, had become fully institutionalised.

Trade union action to promote fair recruitment for migrant workers is active in the Philippines. For instance, with the view to facilitate access to reliable, user-generated information about recruitment agencies, a web-based review platform of labour recruiters developed by the International Trade Union Confederation is currently being tested in the country. Although representatives of workers and employers are usually not involved in multilateral and bilateral labour agreements, an agreement between the Philippines and Germany concerning the placement of Filipino health professionals in employment positions in Germany invited trade unions from both countries to become members of the Joint Committee. Additionally, a strong link exists between unions in the Philippines and Hong Kong (China), allowing the design of coordinated interventions at both ends of the corridor and the sharing of information on the issues and concerns.<sup>50</sup>

Many Filipinos move to improve their job opportunities, follow their family members, marry, educate, or respond to shocks due to conflicts and climate issues. Young people are especially attracted to move from rural areas to urban zones, driven by the manufacturing and construction sectors. There is also considerable rural-to-rural movement, especially for seasonal agricultural work and mining.

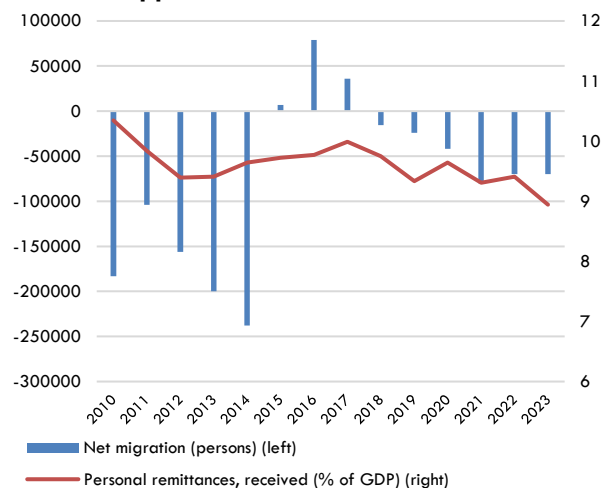
The 2018 National Migration Survey (NMS) is the first nationwide survey on migration in the Philippines. It revealed that 40% of Filipinos aged 15 years and over are lifetime migrants. More than half (53%) of the lifetime migrants were women. The past five years have been dominated by rural-rural migration and urban-urban migration. Rural-urban migration has been meagrely reflected in the urbanisation rate, which grew slowly from 46% in 2011 to 48% in 2023.

Out-migration (emigration) has a long track record in the Philippines, with the world's 9th largest international migrant flow, and has become part of Filipino culture. About 10 million Filipinos live abroad.<sup>51</sup> The number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) or Filipino workers who worked abroad was estimated at 2.2 million in 2023. A large majority (98%) operate with work contracts, not to mention with a weight on women compared with men, 56% vs 44%, respectively. A majority of OFWs are in Asia (77%), with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as the leading destinations, North and South America (9.8%), Europe (8.4%), Australia (3.0%), and Africa (1.3%).<sup>52</sup> Studies found that emigration triggers a brain drain of skilled labour in some sectors in the Philippines; for instance, the health sector.<sup>53</sup>

Figure 8 shows that the net migration flow has demonstrated some interesting shifts from negative to positive during the 2010s. It reverted at the beginning of the 2020s despite more than two million OFWs returning to the country during the Covid-19 pandemic—sometimes by choice and other times by force—and many struggled with the possibility of a future without emigration. The negative net migration flow frequently results from Filipinos seeking higher wages in different countries. The labour export initiative has led to

underinvestment in domestic industry and agriculture.

**Figure 9: Net migration and personal remittance in the Philippines, 2010-2023**



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

Slowly growing returnee migrants support the net migration changes. Investigations have found that these returnees’ potential in human capital development seems limited, as few have acquired more education abroad. In most cases, returnee migrants are overqualified for their jobs in their host countries - only a minority consider employment and investment opportunities in the Philippines as a motive for return. About 70% of returnee migrants reported they experience difficulties finding a job in the Philippines on their return. Often, informal self-employment or business creation are their only options.<sup>54</sup>

Personal remittance is a central part of the Philippines’ economy, which peaked at 13% in 2005 but gradually fell, landing at 8.9% of GDP in 2023 (revisit Figure 9). However, it still stands significantly higher than the East Asia and Pacific average at 0.4%. These remittances are often invested in education and consumption, not to mention much higher than foreign direct investments.

The country has developed a public-private partnership to manage overseas employment, from recruitment, deployment, and redeployment to return. The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) listed 25 bilateral labour agreements in 2024.<sup>55</sup> For instance, the Philippines and Kuwait signed an agreement on workers’ rights in 2018. Workers would be guaranteed food, housing, clothing, and health insurance, and employment contracts would be renewed only with approval from Philippine officials.<sup>56</sup>

The Philippines has a large segment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from disasters, conflict, and violence. Concerning disasters, an alarming scale of 62.2 million persons were displaced from 2008 to 2023, for example, 2.6 million in 2023. These disaster events are mainly related to storms and floods, complicating many workers’ ability to make a living and facing job insecurity, lower income, poor working conditions, and increased poverty. In addition, around 3.3 million persons were internally displaced for conflict and violence reasons in the mentioned period, including 160,000 in 2023.<sup>57</sup>

In the Philippines, there is currently no law relating specifically to the protection of the rights of IDPs. Also, in the absence of a national policy on internal displacement, the Philippines has instead applied a disaster management framework to address displacement caused by terrorism-related conflict. The country faces numerous challenges in the integration and reintegration of IDPs in practice. They often struggle to access essential services such as healthcare, education, clean water, and sanitation facilities. IDPs also have difficulties in finding suitable housing and shelter after being displaced; they are often placed in temporary settlements in overcrowded conditions and

without proper infrastructure and basic amenities.<sup>58</sup>

## Informal Economy

The informal economy is widespread in the Philippines, sidelined by the labour-related legal framework that protects workers in regular employment, such as the security of tenure, entitlement to mandated wages, and social protection benefits.

Micro- or small enterprises dominate the Philippines labour market landscape. Informal workers – often visualised by street vendors, jeepney drivers, and agricultural workers – operate as independent, self-employed, and small-scale producers. The entry of workers into the informal economy is driven mainly by the need to survive rather than the worker's option or choice; besides, many employers and workers are operating with loopholes in labour and business regulations such as minimum wage, contractual employment conditions, paying taxes, and social security schemes due to a lack of awareness or incentives. This adverse environment further challenges industrial relations, organising workers, and performing collective bargaining through social dialogue.

Recent Philippine national laws and regulations related to the informal economy encompass Department Order No. 230-21 Guidelines on Support for Workers in the Informal Economy of 2021. Another law, the Republic Act 11962 or the Trabaho Para sa Bayan Act of 2023, was designed to expand work opportunities, particularly addressing the challenges of unemployment, skills mismatch, and job security. A Trabaho Para sa Bayan Inter-Agency Council (TPB-IAC) has been established to oversee the implementation of the Trabaho Para sa Bayan Plan (TPB Plan). The Council's composition includes four sectoral representatives, each

representing the employers, labour, marginalised and vulnerable groups, and the informal sectors. In addition, a series of other consolidated bills aimed to protect informal workers have been promoted in recent years, linking with the Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy (MACWIE) and the Freelance Workers' Protection Act. These initiatives remain pending at the legislative Committee levels.<sup>59</sup>

National forums dealing with informal economy workers and specific policies addressing the status of informal economy workers took place in recent years. Foremost amongst specific union policy recommendations is the "15-Point Labour Agenda" rolled out by the All-Philippine Trade Unions (APTU). The National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) is currently developing a policy recommendation which aims to harmonize existing definitions of informal economy and informal sector workers by aligning them with ILO's recognised framework. The NAPC organizational structure functions with a basic sector component, representing delegates from 14 distinct sectors. Each sector has its own sectoral council, including one dedicated to workers in the informal sector. In addition, the Women Workers' United (WWU), a forum tackling informal economy workers, is a part of the Women's Priority Legislative Agenda (see more in the Gender sub-section).

Unionism is emerging in the informal economy; some unions have been organizing informal workers at the community level using strategies in social movement unionism.

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

been on the rise; for instance, vulnerable persons covered by social assistance rose from 7.8% in 2015 to 23% in 2022 (see more in the Social Protection section).<sup>60</sup>

In 2022, there were 17 million Filipino workers in the informal economy, representing 36% of the total number of employed persons in the Philippines, with a fall of two percentage points since 2018. The latest Labour Force Survey from March 2023 also registered at least two out of five workers (22%) operated in precarious work, such as self-employed without any paid employee and working without pay in their family-operated farm or business (unpaid family worker).<sup>61</sup> This group is less likely to have formal work arrangements or access to social protection. Instead, they are more at risk during a crisis or shock.

Informal workers are mainly in the agricultural and service sectors, with 48% and 45%, respectively. Informal workers in the industry sector are low at 6.6%. Around four out of ten informal workers reach elementary school level.<sup>62</sup> Many Filipino women work as domestic workers and are often subject to informal, unsafe working conditions both in the Philippines and those working abroad. Forced labour within the informal economy has been detected and primarily affects women and children. This segment of workers mainly consists of fishermen, small-scale factories, domestic services, and agriculture in general.

## Child Labour

Around 30% of the Philippines' population is 0-14 years old. As the Population Pyramid outlines, this segment's growth has lost pace, except an upsurge at the beginning of the 2020s (revisit Figure 7). Reports argue that the Philippines has made "moderate advances" in its long fight against the worst forms of child

labour. Still, resources remain inadequate to accelerate the implementation of programmes.<sup>63</sup> The government established the Child Labour Knowledge Sharing System to monitor instances of child labour and approved the Philippine Programme Against Child Labour Strategic Framework for 2023–2028 to gradually reduce child labour through consultations with government institutions and a wide range of stakeholders.

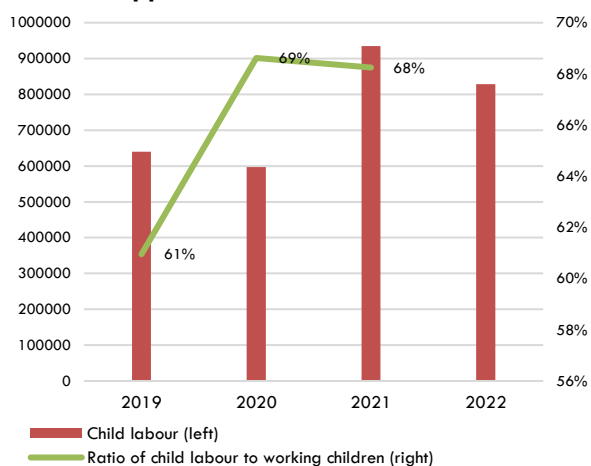
The country has ratified two ILO conventions on effectively abolishing child labour (see Appendix Table 5). The Labour Code prohibits employing children younger than age 15, including for domestic service. The law also prohibits the worst forms of child labour. Children between 15 and 17 are limited to eight working hours per day, up to 40 hours per week. The law forbids the employment of persons younger than 18 in hazardous work. The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, enticing some children to leave school before completing their compulsory education. Reports found that the government did not effectively enforce the law.<sup>64</sup>

The Philippines trade union movement supports the National Council Against Child Labour (NCAACL). This inter-agency and multipartite body would lead, coordinate, and monitor anti-child labour efforts in the country.

The root of child labour is linked with poverty and armed conflicts in the country. The latest official data from 2021 registered almost one million children were in child labour, or 3.0% of the total population of children, which was below East Asia and the Pacific average of 5.6%.<sup>65</sup> The number of child labour skyrocketed from 2020 to 2021 as an impact of the adverse effects triggered by the global Covid-19 pandemic but is started to fall in

2022 (see Figure 10). Achieving the SDG aiming to eradicate all forms of child labour before 2025 requires drastic measures.

**Figure 10: Number and proportion of child labour in the Philippines, 2019-2022**



Source: Philippines Statistics Authority.

Child labour continues mostly in rural and remote areas with a lack of education and weak or even no access to government services. Most child labour is often in family settings. Child workers in gold mining, manufacturing, domestic service, drug trafficking, and garbage scavenging face exposure to hazardous working environments.

## Gender

The Philippines has demonstrated the political will to promote gender equality and is committed to central international gender-related conventions and protocols. Generally, the country’s laws and regulations around the life cycle of a working woman score 79 out of 100 (100 is best) in 2024, relatively higher than the regional average across East Asia and the Pacific at 73. They still encounter a lower ranking on freedom of movement, constraints related to marriage, laws affecting women’s work after having children, gender differences in property and inheritance, and regulations

affecting the size of a woman’s pension (see more details in Appendix Table 16).<sup>66</sup>

In November 2024, the Women Workers’ United (WWU) launched the “Filipino Women Workers’ 15 – Point Agenda” towards engendering the Philippine trade unions’ 15 – Point Labor Agenda.

Table 1 below shows that Filipino men have a significantly higher employment-to-population ratio and share of total employment than women. In contrast, women as employees or employers have considerably lower rates than men, linked to the ‘domestic burden’, making them more likely than men to work part-time or in informal employment in low-productivity sectors. Interestingly, all industries’ aggregated median monthly basic pay and allowance is, on average, four percentage points higher for women than men in the Philippines.

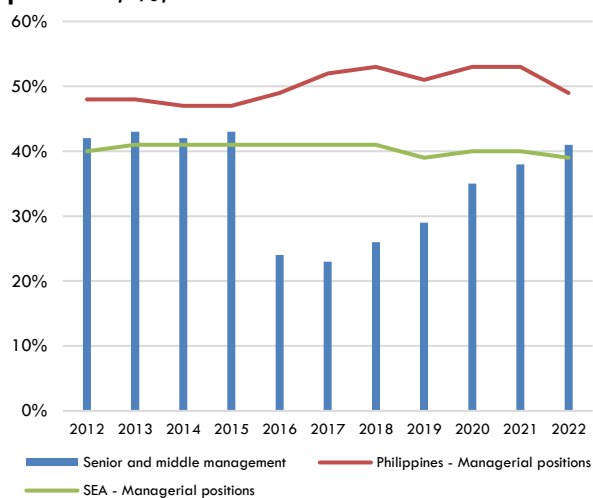
**Table 1: Key indicators for employed gender gaps in the Philippines, 2022**

	Men	Women
Employment-to-population ratio	71%	49%
Employment share	59%	41%
Unemployment rate	2.4%	2.9%
Employees rate	66%	58%
Self-employed rate	34%	42%
Employers rate	3.2%	2.1%

Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Although Filipino women remain sorely underrepresented in the highest positions in both the government and industry, where the most important policies are decided, they have gained some leverage; for instance, the proportion of those in senior and middle management positions has been on the rise in recent years and hovers above the South-Eastern Asia average concerning those in managerial positions (see more in Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Proportion of women in senior and middle management positions and managerial positions, %, 2012-2022**



Note: SEA – South-Eastern Asia.

Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

The Philippines is the only Asian country ranking among the top 20 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2023. However, gender inequality is still haunted by beliefs around gender roles, norms, and female empowerment. For instance, Filipino women working in the informal economy are challenged with structural barriers that prevent them from accessing decent paid work, which is linked with the traditionally assigned role of unpaid care and domestic work. It leads most of them to low-quality jobs.<sup>67</sup> This situation is reflected in the global Gender Inequality Index (GII), ranking the Philippines 92 out of 166 countries (1 is best) in 2022 due to the relatively high maternal mortality ratio and the deep gender gap in the labour force participation rate. Poor access to reproductive health information in rural areas, poverty, and limited formal education contributed to low usage of contraceptives and high pregnancy rates. Also, Filipino women have difficulty working in non-traditional fields, receive slower promotions, and are more likely to be dismissed.

## Youth

Youth is the labour market's future backbone. The Philippines' population structure has a 'youth bulge', a term used to describe the increase in the youthful population. In 2022, the youth (aged 15-24 years) accounted for a substantial portion of the working-age population, reaching 20 million or 26% of the total working-age population, facing a slowly dwindling trend.<sup>68</sup>

The Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) 2013-2028 establishes a framework for coordinated action among youth, various institutions, and stakeholders at all levels. The Philippine Population and Development Programme (PPDP) for 2023-2028 has adopted a life-cycle and intergenerational approach to development, recognizing as a critical demographic strategy the necessity of boosting expenditures on adolescent and child development and well-being and maintaining the well-being of older age groups.

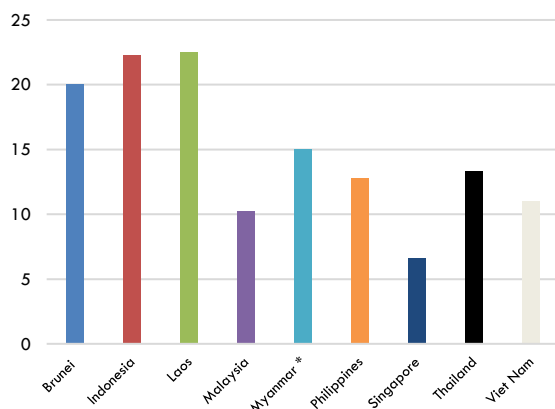
Based on national survey data, around 373,000 young Filipinos entered the job market in 2022. The ratio of youth in employment to total employment has experienced a drop by six percentage points during the last decade, landing at 13%.<sup>69</sup>

The Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 has noted that although youth employability has improved, full-cycle employment interventions still need to be fully integrated, as well as they continue to face challenging employment prospects, resulting in persistent inactivity rates in education, training, and employment. The Philippines' low-medium ranking on the Global Youth Development Index, 108 out of 183 countries in 2023, reflects the youth's challenges. This ranking, particularly the country's worst score in political & civic participation rank (148) and the

employment & opportunity rank (140), underscores the need for action to improve the situation.<sup>70</sup>

The Philippines' relatively low youth unemployment rate of 6.9% in 2022 has followed a falling trend (revisit Figure 8), suggesting that the economy generates jobs. It is worth mentioning that the relatively high emigration rate somewhat overshadows this relatively low youth unemployment and notes that youth compose half of the unemployed population. In addition, the labour market does not generate sufficient jobs in the formal sector. Instead, a large majority of young Filipino workers operate in the private sector, haunted by informality. The not-in-education, employment, or training (NEET rate) better indicates the extent of barriers facing young people in the labour market than the unemployment rate does. The Philippines' NEET rate was 13% in 2022, significantly falling and placing four percentage points lower than the South-Eastern Asia average (see more in Figure 12). The Philippines' NEET rate is higher for women than men, 15% vs 10%, respectively. Young people from lower-income families are usually more present in the NEET rate.

**Figure 12: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training in the Philippines and other ASEAN countries, %, 2022**



\* Data from 2020.

Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Another weakness for Filipino youth is the mismatch between job requirements and graduates' qualifications. According to the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, approximately one million college and vocational graduates face a job-skills mismatch. Job mismatch is also the primary factor for under-employment in the country.<sup>71</sup>

As indicated, active youth are often among informal workers or short-term labour contracting side-lined for social protection. These groups are challenged by inadequate training and career opportunities, and they usually earn less than the minimum wage compared to the non-youth groups. Insufficient job creation in the formal sector and cultural aspects discourage many Filipino youths, who become economically inactive in the labour market.

## EDUCATION

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

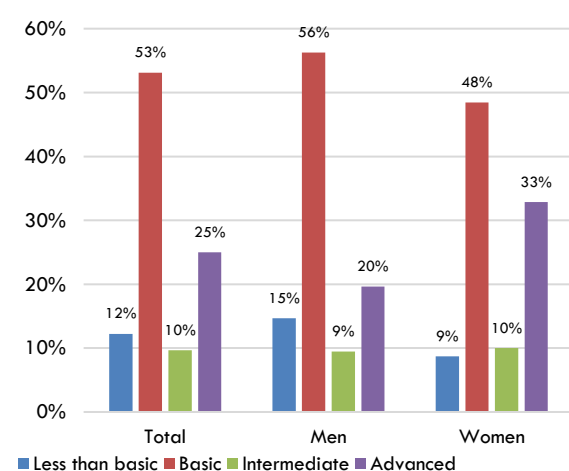
Government spending on education levels in the Philippines fell since its peak at 20% of government expenditure in 2017, down to 16% in 2022, which is 2.6 percentage points higher than East Asia and the Pacific.<sup>72</sup>

Generally, mean years of schooling rose from 8.1 in 2017 to 10 in 2022. At least half of Filipinos in employment are dominated by basic



education, and a quarter with advanced education, even with a higher bulk for women than men; those workers with intermediate education represent the lowest group (see more in Figure 13). It is observed that employment by education has experienced a significant drop among those at the basic level, mostly landing among those with less than basic education. This stance suggests the government has not prioritised secondary education in the country.

**Figure 13: Employment by education share in the Philippines, Total & Gender, 2022**



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Overall, the country falls behind in the region in education and shows poor performance in international standardised student assessments. For instance, the Philippines has been haunted by one of the highest dropout rates among the ASEAN countries. Some of the reasons are that many students skip class to find some income to support their families, linking with massive internally displaced persons due to climate changes impact or conflicts in zones like the southern regions of Mindanao disrupt families' lives. Additionally, a recent study found that the Philippines ranked sixth to the last in reading and mathematics and third to the last in science among 81 countries. The Philippines also ranks at the bottom of the new Pisa test on creative thinking, scoring the lowest among the 64 ranked countries in the report.<sup>73</sup>

## Vocational Training

The Philippines' Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is covered by a broad legal framework (see more in Appendix Table 17).

The Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) are the major agencies responsible for the implementation of public TVET programmes, in consultation with relevant stakeholders in the higher education and the technical vocational education sector. Apart from the formal TVET system, TESDA, local government units (LGUs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) offer non-formal TVET programmes. These include education opportunities for out-of-school youths or adult illiterates who cannot afford formal education.

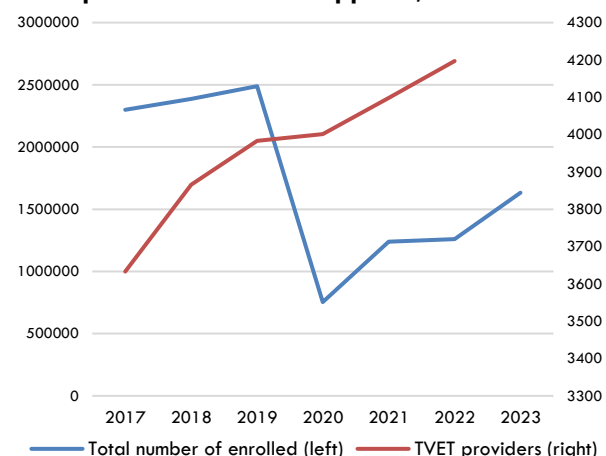
The National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan (NTESDP) 2023-2028 sets the TVET sector's roadmap for the next five years and links with the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028. The NTESDP 2023-2028 has six strategic pillars, including expanded and sustained collaborations with industry, government, academia, labour, and other stakeholders. It envisions being smart and innovative and substantially addressing learning poverty.

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

Six trade union representatives on the Board of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority play a key role in TVET policy formulation and implementation. Trade unions are also involved in policy implementation of skills development at the enterprise level through Technical Training Institutes, which are set up from their initiative; in some cases, trade unions participate in labour-management committees. Although the Board of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, which operates with full-time technical support from government representatives and their respective agencies and employers, have their own Human Resources departments, organised workers' representatives do not have the same level of support.<sup>74</sup>

Figure 14 shows that there has been a growth in the Philippines' TVET providers from 3,966 in 2017 to 4,631 in 2022, with private institutions dominating at nine out of ten (90%). The high share of private TVET providers is attributed to the relatively low flow of government funding through TVET scholarship programmes. The TVET enrollees were on the rise until the global COVID-19 crisis caused a deep drop in the TVET enrolment rate in 2020, and it has not yet reached the 2019 peak. This stance triggered a serious inward reflection and assessment of the TVET system, responding to the need for the economic, pedagogical, and infrastructure challenges of providing hands-on practical training using tools and machines through online training. The share of all secondary education students enrolled in vocational programmes has been significantly lower than the regional average, 9.7% vs 16% respectively. On the other hand, both are in line with the share of all students in upper secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes at 37%.<sup>75</sup>

**Figure 14: Total number of enrolled in TVET and TVET providers in the Philippines, 2017-2023**



Source: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Annual Reports.

Another worrisome trend is that Filipino firms offering formal training fell by 60% in 2015 to 42% of firms in 2023 but remains ten points higher than the East Asia & Pacific average at 32% for the same year.<sup>76</sup> Formal firms continue to be a small group compared to the widespread informal micro- and small enterprises. Despite efforts, enterprise-based training remains low and concentrated mainly in more industrialised regions. TESDA found that industry support and commitment were not fully achieved, particularly regarding industry involvement in labour market information, assessment, certification, and TVET financing. Introducing mobile laboratories, which aimed to increase training participation and give opportunities for productivity, was also not sufficiently met.<sup>77</sup>

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

is also experiencing a ‘brain drain’ with a very high percentage of skilled Philippine workers seeking employment abroad.

Studies have revealed that people in the Philippines are more likely to have plans to emigrate when they receive vocational training. This situation links the training programmes to the domestic labour market; for example, if training does not lead to the right job or a higher income, it could increase incentives to withdraw from the domestic labour market and search for jobs abroad. It is also possible that people are participating in vocational training programmes to find employment abroad.<sup>78</sup>

### Fourth Industrial Revolution

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is disrupting the labour market worldwide. Job displacement and gains due to digitisation are becoming more urgent, and upskilling and retooling are putting pressure on the TVET system. There is a high awareness of 4IR in the Philippines, and some innovative policies are already in place. For example, in June 2024, the government launched the National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy Roadmap 2.0, expecting a fast-track AI development in the country, expand upskilling programmes to equip the workforce and increase the uptake of AI-enabled processes and solutions by the business sector. Flexible learning programmes such as TESDA’s online programme play a central role in retooling and upskilling displaced workers.

Projections suggest that 4IR technologies will lead to 24% (11 million workers) of the current workforce being displaced by technologies related to 4IR in the Philippines. However, there are no guarantees that displaced workers can move into these new jobs without adequate and timely investments in skills development. Other

factors that challenge the 4IR evolution are job tasks will shift from routine, physical tasks to higher-order tasks with 4IR; skills shortages and skills levels in the information technology-business process outsourcing (IT-BPO) industries; training institutions in the Philippines need to prepare for the challenges of 4IR; courses and training delivery have begun to change but further transformation is needed; despite some promising policy initiatives, greater coordination is required to prepare for 4IR. adequately.<sup>79</sup>

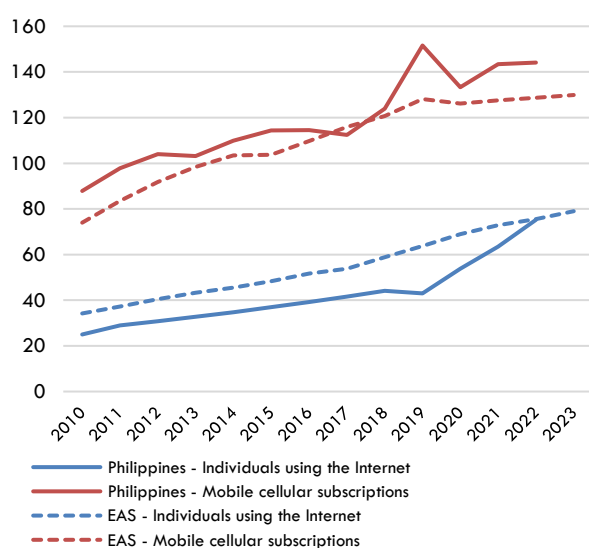
The Philippines is one of the top outsourcing destinations, as it offers expertise in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. These BPO sectors focus on back-office operations (Human Resources, finance, and IT) and front-office functions, such as customer support and call centres. Estimations suggest that the Philippine BPO industry contributes nearly US\$30 billion annually to the economy and assessed that the country holds 10-15% of the global BPO market.<sup>80</sup> It is projected that around 1.7 million Filipinos BPO workers in 2024, equalling a share of 3.5% of total employment.<sup>81</sup>

Although digital labour platforms have offered opportunities to earn an income, many could face a risk of displacement and informalisation, sidelining workers to protect labour laws. Reports found that digital labour platforms can potentially obscure the relationship between employers and workers that forms the core basis of unionisation. For workers engaged in digital platform work, usually classified as independent contractors, the challenges relate to regularity of work and income, working conditions, social protection, and access to the fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.<sup>82</sup> Data on Filipino workers’ scope of the platform is scarce. Nevertheless, research suggests that only one

union in the IT-BPO sector, the Unified Employees of Alorica, was registered since 2015.<sup>83</sup> Challenges of unionism in the IT-BPO industry are also due to insufficient design of services addressing this group's needs. In addition, at least a third of BPO workers operate in informality. IT-BPO hubs are located inside SEZs and enjoy status as ecozones (revisit the Special Economic Zones sub-section).

Among Filipino students, employment in information and communication technology (ICT) services has become a top choice for both males and females. Despite the evolution of ICT services, studies have found that as many as 49% of jobs in the Philippines, including over 80% of workers in the BPO and electronic manufacturing sector, were at high risk of being substituted by technology developments like AI.<sup>84</sup> Another reflection is that individuals using the internet has accelerated and now supersedes regional average and already hovering above it concerning demands for mobile cellular subscriptions (see more in Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Individuals using the Internet (% of population) and mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people) in the Philippines and East Asia & Pacific (EAS), 2010-2023**



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION

The Philippines' social protection system is structured by policies and more than sixty programs delivered by various agencies, supported by a relatively strong legal framework based on separate sector-specific and programme-specific laws. The government currently operates with the Social Protection Plan 2023-2028, with three strategic focus areas: i) complete implementation of the social protection floor, ii) development of adaptive and shock-responsive social protection programs, and iii) rationalisation, modernisation and integration of the social protection system. The country has also ratified three of fifteen ILO social security conventions (C118, C157, and C176 – see Appendix Table 5).

The Philippines' expenditure on social protection, at 2.9% of GDP, is close to the South-Eastern Asia average of 3.0%.<sup>85</sup> It stands slightly below the ILO's threshold of 3.3% of GDP, which is needed to establish national social protection floors in developing countries.

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) manages the main social insurance scheme for public civil servants. Workers from the private sector are joined via the Social Security System (SSS). Together with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), they manage the major social insurance schemes in the country.

There are more than ten coordinative social security bodies whose mandates focus on social protection, including the Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, which function with trade union representation. It is worth mentioning that public sector trade unions have welcomed a recent announcement from

the government that recently approved social protection floors (SPFs) will cover precarious public services workers, including community health workers, known as Barangay Health Workers (BHWs). Overall, these bodies' landscape is challenged by a lack of unified targeting system.

The social protection system is based on four main components: i) labour market interventions, ii) social insurance, iii) social welfare, and iv) social safety nets and others. Despite the implementation of a wide range of programmes, several continue to be challenged by low penetration rates and leakage issues (programmes benefit the non-poor group).<sup>86</sup>

The system for non-contributory social protection programmes was boosted: Based on the latest data available, the coverage of social safety net programmes grasped 35% of the population at the end of the 2010s, with some leakage among the richest quintiles.<sup>87</sup> Other data of poor Filipino persons covered by social protection systems was registered of 100% in 2022.<sup>88</sup> Another trend is that the social insurance programmes have achieved meagre progress in coverage during the last decade, landing at 14% of the population at the end-2010s. A leakage has challenged it to the richest quintile; the poorest has a weak coverage of just 6.2%.

A worrisome trend is that the percentage of the Filipino population covered by at least one social protection scheme fell from 47% in 2016 to 35% in 2022. This trend was in contrast with South-Eastern Asia, which was on the rise but somewhat stalled at the beginning of the 2020s; it hovered ten percentage points above the Philippines' coverage at 45% in 2022 (see other social security schemes' coverage in Appendix Table 18).

The pension system's contribution-based basic minimum pensions cover employees up to age 60 who earn more than PHP1,000 (US\$17) a month. There are unique systems for government employees and military personnel. The country has experienced a remarkable upsurge in recent years in the coverage of persons above retirement age receiving a pension, grasping 66% in 2021 and hovering far above the regional average of 45%. Still, one out of three (34%) of older Filipino people are left with no pension. Those receiving a pension receive a low allowance, even one of the weakest in the region, currently landing the minimum pension for both basic and earnings-related components at PHP1,200 (US\$21) a month in 2024, which is far below the lowest minimum wage of PHP16,416 (US\$287).

Unemployment schemes with cash benefits are granted to covered employees, including domestic workers (Kasambahays) and Overseas Filipino Workers who are involuntarily separated from employment and have satisfied the eligibility requirements. It was registered that the number of unemployed receiving unemployment benefits coverage was 5.6% in 2021, which was half of the regional average of 10%.

The SSS has instituted programmes for domestic workers to handle and streamline the registration process for household employers and domestic workers. A survey by the Department of Labour and Employment and the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that, as of October 2019, or six years after the enactment of the Domestic Workers Act (RA 10361) of 2013, some 83% of the 1.4 million household workers still did not enjoy any social security benefit.<sup>89</sup>

All pregnant employees in the Philippines are entitled to 105 days of paid maternity leave

for normal delivery, with the potential for an additional 30 days of unpaid leave under certain conditions. Eligible single mothers receive 15 additional paid days of maternity leave under the Solo Parents Welfare Act. However, coverage reached just 15% of mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits in 2021, half of the South-Eastern Asia average of 30%.<sup>90</sup> Male employees are granted seven days of paid paternity leave when their wife gives birth. This leave can be extended to 14 days if the mother transfers seven days of her maternity leave to the father. Paternity leave is available for the first four children and only applies to married employees. Data on paternity leave coverage are scarce.

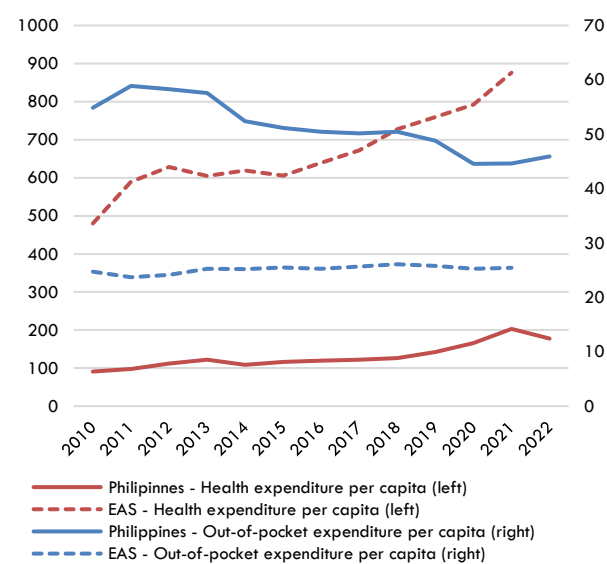
The bulk of Filipino workers in the informal economy are sidelined for legal access to social protection schemes. It limits their access to pensions, insurance and other unemployment or retirement benefits, making them vulnerable to shocks. To extend social protection and decent work to the informal economy, the first tripartite plus meeting on integrated formalisation was launched in June 2024.<sup>91</sup>

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

Health Insurance Programme (NHIP), making PhilHealth entitlement accessible to all Filipinos.

Generally, the country has achieved some progress in healthcare during the last decade, marked by significant reductions in maternal mortality rate, but in child mortality rate and life expectancy only on the margin. In addition, the country's out-of-pocket health expenditure is falling but stays notably higher than the regional average, and health expenditure per capita remains pointedly lower (Figure 16). Government health expenditure was boosted at the beginning of the 2020s due to the Covid-19 pandemic, landing above the World Health Organization's minimum threshold of 4% of GDP. It is observed that the country underwent a drop in the universal health service coverage index from 60 in 2019 to 58 in 2021 (revisit Appendix Table 18).

**Figure 16: Current health expenditure per capita (current US\$) and out-of-pocket expenditure (% of current health expenditure) trends in the Philippines and East Asia and the Pacific (EAS), 2010-2022**



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

## APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA

**Table 2: The Philippines's key economic data, projections, 2019-2025**

Values	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
GDP (current, US\$, billion)	377bn	362bn	394bn	404bn	437bn	470bn	508bn	550bn
GDP per capita (PPP, US\$)	9,762	8,678	9,101	9,715	10,165	10,630	11,161	11,734
Total investment (% of GDP)	26%	17%	21%	25%	23%	23%	23%	26%
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	26%	21%	20%	20%	21%	21%	22%	24%
Government expenditure (% of GDP)	22%	26%	27%	26%	25%	24%	24%	23%
Government gross debt (% of GDP)	37%	52%	57%	57%	57%	58%	58%	58%

Source: International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, Octobre 2024.

**Table 3: The Philippines' legal framework on industrial relations**

National legal framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 126 (EO 126), January 31, 1987, Reorganizing the Ministry of Labor and Employment and for Other Purposes Omnibus Rules Implementing the Labor Code of Philippines, Rule XII of Book V, establishing the Labor-Management Council.</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 126, January 31, 1987, Reorganizing the Ministry of Labor and Employment and for Other Purposes.</li> <li>• Amended Rules and Regulations Governing the Exercise of the Right of Government Employees to Organize, 2005.</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 403 establishing the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council.</li> <li>• Republic Act No. 6975 of December 13, 1990, Establishing the Philippine National Police Under a Reorganized Department of the Interior and Local Government, and for other Purposes.</li> <li>• Republic Act No. 10395 of March 14, 2013, Strengthening Tripartism, Amending for the Purpose Article 275 of Presidential Decree No. 442, as amended, otherwise known as the "Labor Code of the Philippines".</li> <li>• Department Order No. 40-03 (Series of 2003) Amending the Implementing Rules of Book V of the Labor Code of the Philippines.</li> <li>• Labour Code of the Philippines, Presidential Decree No. 442, s. 1974 (as Amended and renumbered by Department of Labour and Employment Advisory Note No. 1 of July 2015).</li> <li>• Executive Order No. 180 providing guidelines for the exercise of the right to organize of government employees, creating a public sector labour-management council, and for other purposes.</li> </ul>

Source: International Labour Organization, IRLEX, Philippines.

**Table 4: Legal reservations in the Philippines concerning the rights to organise, collective bargaining, and strikes**

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

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



**Table 5: Status of ratified ILO Conventions in the Philippines**

Subject and/or right	Convention	Ratification date
<b>Fundamental Conventions</b>		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948	1953
	C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1953
Elimination of all forms of forced labour	C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930	2005
	C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1960
Effective abolition of child labour	C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973	1998
	C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2000
Elimination of discrimination in employment	C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1953
	C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1960
Occupational safety and health	C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981	Not ratified
	C187 - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006	2019
<b>Governance Conventions</b>		
Labour inspection	C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	2024 *
	C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969	Not ratified
Employment policy	C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964	1 976
Tripartism	C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	1991
<b>Technical Conventions (Up-to-date)</b>		
Children and young persons	C077 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946	1960
Wages	C094 - Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949	1953
	C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	1953
Migrant Workers	C097 - Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949	2009
	C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975	2006
Specific categories of workers	C110 - Plantations Convention, 1958	1968
	C149 - Nursing Personnel Convention, 1977	1979
	C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011	2012
Social Security	C118 - Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962	1994
	C157 - Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982	1994
	C165 - Social Security (Seafarers) Convention (Revised), 1987 *	2004
Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and industrial relations	C141 - Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975	1979
	C151 - Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978	2017
Employment policy and promotion	C159 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983	1991
Occupational safety and health	C176 - Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995	1998
Seafarers	C185 - Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 **	2012
	MLC - Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 ***	2012
Equality of opportunity and treatment	C190 - Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019	2024 *

\* The Convention will enter into force for Philippines on February 20, 2025.

Source: International Labour Organization, NORMLEX, Philippines, November 2024.

**Table 6: Labour market efficiency in the Philippines, 2019**

Indicator	Rank
Total	39
Redundancy costs (weeks of salary) **	116
Hiring and firing practices *	54
Cooperation in labour-employer relations *	15
Flexibility of wage determination *	51
Active labour market policies *	50
Worker's rights *	104
Ease of hiring foreign labour *	76
Internal labour mobility *	7
Reliance on professional management *	28
Pay and productivity *	13
Ratio of wage and salaried female workers to male workers **	87
Labour tax rate **	26

\* Survey data. \*\* Ranked by per cent.

Note: Rank from 1 to 141 (1 is highest).

Source: The Global Competitiveness Report, 2019, 8<sup>th</sup> pillar: Labour market efficiency.

**Table 7: Ease of Doing Business in the Philippines, 2020**

Topics	2020
Overall	95
Starting a Business	171
Dealing with Construction Permits	85
Getting Electricity	32
Registering Property	120
Getting Credit	132
Protecting Minority Investors	72
Paying Taxes	95
Trading Across Borders	113
Enforcing Contracts	152
Resolving Insolvency	65

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

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

**Table 8: Scores for Labour Rights Index's legislative performance indicators for the Philippines, 2024**

Fair wages	Decent Working Hours	Employment Security	Family Responsibilities	Maternity at Work	Safe Work	Social Security	Fair Treatment	Child & Forced Labour	Freedom of Association	Index score
80	60	80	50	100	75	80	80	75	0	68

Note: Overall scores are calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score.

Source: WageIndicator.org & Centre for Labour Research, Labour Rights Index 2024: Philippines.

**Table 9: Status of organised workers in the Philippines, 2023**

Indicator	Value
Public sector organisations	1,980
Number of members	613,885
Private sector organisations	18,429
Number of members	1,665,298
Workers' Associations organisations *	117,446
Number of members	3,276,518

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

Source: Philippines' Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview, January – December 2023.

**Table 10: Federations with the largest number of union members, 2023**

Federations	Members	Affiliates
Philippine Trade and General Workers Organization (PTGWO)	98,314	375
Associated Labor Unions (ALU)	84,263	1,002
Alyansa ng Manggagawa at Pilipinong Organizado (AMAPO)	47,531	46
Federation of Free Workers (FFW)	37,768	488
National Federation of Labor Unions (NAFLU)	31,404	319
Solidarity of Unions in the Philippines for Empowerment and Reforms (SUPER)	28,421	460
National Federation of Labor (NFL)	22,855	196
Obrero Pilipino	22,015	150
Association of Genuine Labor Organization (AGLO)	21,008	176
National Federation of Labor Unions-KMU (NAFLU-KMU)	17,682	154
<b>Total</b>	<b>411,261</b>	<b>3,366</b>

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

Source: Bureau of Labour Relations, Labour Relations Overview 2023.

**Table 11: Reported members of existing labour organisations, workers' associations, and Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) in the Philippines, 2017-2024**

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 *	Growth, 2017-2024
<b>Labour organisations</b>	<b>5,027,874</b>	<b>4,689,058</b>	<b>4,739,994</b>	<b>4,777,988</b>	<b>4,801,080</b>	<b>4,973,653</b>	<b>5,250,042</b>	<b>6,256,719</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>Public sector</b>	<b>450,686</b>	<b>469,020</b>	<b>490,696</b>	<b>495,678</b>	<b>500,670</b>	<b>513,266</b>	<b>548,591</b>	<b>653,979</b>	<b>45%</b>
National Government Agencies	277,775	278,966	286,002	284,903	285,288	286,325	306,880	371,227	34%
Local Government Units	88,520	98,797	112,121	115,871	119,427	129,232	133,935	160,084	81%
State Universities & Colleges	40,407	42,085	43,208	44,196	45,153	46,621	46,786	49,195	22%
Government Owned & Controlled Corporations	43,984	49,172	49,365	50,708	50,802	51,088	60,990	73,473	67%
<b>Private sector - Enterprise Based Unions</b>	<b>1,543,514</b>	<b>1,543,185</b>	<b>1,566,173</b>	<b>1,596,576</b>	<b>1,614,554</b>	<b>1,626,337</b>	<b>1,650,912</b>	<b>1,678,625</b>	<b>8.8%</b>
Affiliates	160,281	160,366	160,484	161,584	162,956	166,251	166,791	170,830	6.6%
Chartered locals	596,591	592,358	608,673	625,933	637,426	644,105	661,183	680,346	14%
Independent unions	786,642	790,461	797,016	809,059	814,172	815,981	822,938	827,449	5.2%
<b>Workers Association</b>	<b>3,033,674</b>	<b>2,676,853</b>	<b>2,683,125</b>	<b>2,685,734</b>	<b>2,685,856</b>	<b>2,834,050</b>	<b>3,050,539</b>	<b>3,924,115</b>	<b>29%</b>
Operating in one region	2,910,787	2,548,638	2,548,845	2,551,438	2,551,416	2,699,473	2,915,885	3,659,192	26%
Operating in more than one region	122,887	128,215	134,280	134,296	134,440	134,577	134,654	264,923	116%
<b>Existing CBAs</b>	<b>220,905</b>	<b>186,892</b>	<b>203,229</b>	<b>182,030</b>	<b>189,980</b>	<b>240,460</b>	<b>274,594</b>	<b>320,877</b>	<b>45%</b>
Independent Unions	102,750	94,231	88,135	85,575	95,878	98,437	113,048	132,487	29%
Federated Unions	118,155	92,661	115,094	96,455	94,102	142,023	161,546	188,390	59%

\* As of 3rd Quarter 2024.

Source: Philippines Bureau of Labour Relations, Statistical Reports.

**Table 12: Alternative Disputes Resolution results in the Philippines, 2019-2022**

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

Source: The Department of Labour and Employment's National Conciliation and Mediation Board, [ADR Updates](#).

**Table 13: Central tripartite institutions in the Philippines**

<b>Central tripartite institutions</b>
<b>Central consultative bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Tripartite Advisory Committee (NTAC).</li> <li>• National Tripartite Industrial Peace Councils (NTIPC) and its various sub-committees, including the Standing Committee on Social Dialogue. These committees are spread out at regional, provincial, city, and municipality levels.</li> <li>• National Industrial Peace Council Monitoring Body.</li> </ul>
<b>Other policy-making bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).</li> <li>• Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).</li> <li>• Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC).</li> <li>• National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC).</li> <li>• Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).</li> <li>• Employees' Compensation Commission (ECC).</li> <li>• Tripartite Voluntary Arbitration Advisory Council (TVAAC).</li> </ul>
<b>Other bodies with policy-making functions where the DoLE and social partners are represented</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Security Commission (SSC).</li> <li>• Home Mutual Development Fund (HDMF).</li> <li>• Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA).</li> <li>• Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC).</li> </ul>
<b>Quasi-Judicial Bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Labour Relations Commission (NLRC).</li> <li>• National Wages and Productivity (NWPC).</li> </ul>
<b>Quasi-Legislative Bodies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs).</li> </ul>

**Table 14: The Nagkaisa labour coalition, December 2024**

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

Source: Nagkaisa, *About*.

**Table 15: The Philippines's key workforce data, 2022**

Indicator	Value
Working Age Population	76,596,500
Employment rate	60%
Unemployment rate	2.6%
Employed share	
<i>Urban</i>	52%
<i>Rural</i>	48%
<i>Public</i>	9.1%
<i>Private</i>	91%
Employed by aggregated sector share	
<i>Agriculture</i>	23%
<i>Industry</i>	18%
<i>Service</i>	59%

Source: Philippines Labour Force Survey 2022.

**Table 16: The Philippines - Scores for Women, Business and the Law, 2024**

Mobility	Workplace	Pay	Marriage	Parenthood	Entrepreneurship	Assets	Pension	Index score
75	100	100	60	60	100	60	75	79

Note: Overall scores are calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score.

Source: The World Bank, Philippines: Women, Business and the Law 2024.

**Table 17: Central education laws/acts in the Philippines**

Laws	Issues
Kindergarten Education Act of 2012.	This act makes kindergarten education the first stage of compulsory and mandatory formal education before Grade 1.
Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013.	This act provides at least one year of preschool and 12 years of basic education.
Anti-Bullying Act of 2013	This act encompasses all public and private basic-education schools and they are mandated to adopt anti-bullying policies and establish intervention programmes for both the child victim and the child bully.
Fast-Tracked Science and Technology Scholarship Act of 2013	This act promotes the hiring of teachers from among the graduates of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses and it enhances the current science and technology scholarships offered by the Department of Science and Technology;
Rural Farm Schools Act	This act aims to provide an alternative mode of secondary education in rural areas with the establishment of rural farm schools in the country (and these are to follow the general secondary education curriculum with additional courses focused on agri-fishery arts.
Iskolar ng Bayan Act of 2014	This act mandates all state universities and colleges to admit and provide scholarship grants to the top 10 public high-school graduates subject to some requirements and conditions provided by the law and the implementing rules and regulations to be formulated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the DepEd.
Palarong Pambansa Act of 2013	This act institutionalised the conduct of the Palarong Pambansa every year, making the event the “primary avenue for providing in-school sports opportunities to improve the physical, intellectual and social well-being of the youth.”
Labour Education Act of 2021	This act integrates labour education into the tertiary education curriculum. These changes make up one of the most ambitious and complex education sector reform processes undertaken in the country's education system.

<b>Technical and Vocational Education and Training</b>	
Republic Act No. 11230 of 2019	An act instituting a Philippine labour force competencies and competitiveness programme and free access to technical-vocational education and training.
Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2016	This act has four components: free higher education, free TVET, tertiary-education subsidy and the student loan programme.
Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Act of 2015	This act unifies all modalities of publicly funded Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs) Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid and Student Loans for Tertiary Education. The UniFAST Act rationalises the allocation, utilization and client-targeting of government resources and improves access to quality higher and technical education for the beneficiaries.
Republic Act No. 10650 ("Open Distance Learning Act") of 2014.	Expands and further democratizes access to quality tertiary education through the promotion and application of open learning as a philosophy of access to educational services.
Republic Act No. 10771 (Green Jobs Act) of 2016)	The Green Jobs Act promotes the creation of "green jobs" and employment that contributes to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment in the agriculture, industry, or services sectors. The act also mandates the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) to coordinate with other government agencies in formulating a National Green Jobs Human Resource Development Plan on the expansion, enhancement, and utilization of the labour force, both in the private and public sector.
Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013	This act provides senior high school students with specialised tracks such as the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL).
JobStart Philippines Act	This act promotes a programme of the Department of Labour and Employment which shortens youth's school-to-work transition by enhancing job seekers' knowledge and skills acquired in the formal education or technical training and enabling them to become more responsive to the demands of the labour market. With the participation of the private sector and other stakeholders, the programme will also help develop the life skills of youth, including those relevant to the values of professionalism and work appreciation, and provide trainees with a conducive and safe work environment or an avenue where they can apply relevant theories and code of ethics.
National TechVoc Day Act	This act is an advocacy campaign through lead agencies TESDA and DepEd, which aims to provide opportunities for all government entities to engage in activities in celebration of National TechVoc Day. Through this Act, relevance of technical-vocational education in the Philippine economy is better appreciated and supported.
Agri-Fishery Mechanization Act	This act firms up the policy of modernizing Philippine agriculture through agricultural mechanization. Industrialization for economic development is recommended as a strategy to support agricultural development. The act aims for increased production of farmers and fisherfolk while boosting the interest of the youth, undergraduates and graduates on agricultural engineering courses and technical vocational programmes in agricultural and fisheries mechanisation.
Sec. 24 of the Magna Carta for Women or the Right to Education and Training	The magna mandates the State to ensure the following: "(a) Women migrant workers have the opportunity to undergo skills training, if they so desire, before taking on a foreign job, and possible retraining upon return to the country; (b) Gender-sensitive training and seminars; and (c) Equal opportunities in scholarships based on merit and fitness especially to those interested in research and development aimed towards women-friendly farm technology."

Source: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.



**Table 18: Proportion of population covered by social protection systems and health in the Philippines and South-Eastern Asia (SEA), %, 2021/2022**

Indicator	Philippines	SEA
Population covered by at least one social protection benefit	35%	45%
Persons above retirement age receiving a pension	66%	45%
Persons with severe disabilities collecting disability social protection benefits	2.2%	28%
Unemployed receiving unemployment benefits	5.6%	10%
Mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits	15%	29%
Employed covered in the event of work injury	33%	29%
Poor persons covered by social protection systems	100%	-
Children/households receiving child/family cash benefits	9.9%	24%
Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance	23%	37%
SDG 3.8.1: Universal health coverage, % of population	58%	-

Source: International Labour Organisation, *Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM)*; World Health Organization, *Coverage of essential health services (SDG 3.8.1) (%)*.

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