BAYANIHAN, PANAGHIUSA AT PAG-ASA:

MOVING AS ONE NATION TOWARDS A BETTER NORMAL

THE PRESIDENT'S PENULTIMATE REPORT TO THE PEOPLE 2016-2020

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Bayanihan, Panaghiusa, at Pag-asa:
Moving as One Nation Towards a Better Normal

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PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila 1005 Philippines
Tel No.: +632 876-8450
E-mail Address: info@pms.gov.ph

Foreword

By the grace of God, I have reached the penultimate year of my term. The past four years have been a testament that, indeed, no leader, however strong, can succeed at anything of national importance unless he has the support and cooperation of the people he is tasked to lead and sworn to serve. I owe my leadership to the trust, cooperation, solidarity, and resiliency of the Filipino people, especially in these most trying times as we, like the rest of the world, battle a faceless enemy.

When COVID-19 struck, I knew my priority: *bago ang lahat, buhay muna*. Life above everything else. It would have been a more difficult choice had we not put in place sound economic fundamentals since the beginning of my Administration. Because of the milestones we have achieved as a nation towards a comfortable life for all – from instituting long-awaited reforms in the way government works, practicing prudent economic management towards a strong and resilient economy, to pouring out investments in people-centered development programs and enhancing national resiliency – we faced the pandemic with our governance, economy, and social services stronger than ever. All these laid a strong foundation for our country to uphold the primacy of life in the midst of a global health emergency.

As our country is being tested like never before in recent history, this pandemic has undeniably brought out the best in the Filipino. Thus, as your President, I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for the trust, solidarity, and resiliency. To those who selflessly provided medical and health-related frontline services; those who ensured the steady supply of food, water, and basic utilities to our households; those who kept the peace and order in our communities; those who manned and kept essential establishments operational; those who kept our communities clean; the Good Samaritans who

rushed to the aid of the afflicted and needy; and those who faithfully adhered to health protocols for the safety of all, daghang salamat po!

Admittedly, the government cannot do it without your help. Everyone's cooperation and support is needed. Together, we shall continue to fight this pandemic with the same fervor we had exhibited in the past four years. If at all, this adversity has reignited within each and everyone of us the unique Filipino traits of *bayanihan, panaghiusa* and *malasakit*. With the indomitable Filipino spirit, we shall bounce back and tread the path towards a better normal for everyone.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE

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BUHAY MUNA: MANAGING THE PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPACT

- Managing the Global Pandemic
- Reinforcing the Spirit of Bayanihan

Photo Credit: National Incident Command, National Task Force Against COVID-19 (NIC, NTF COVID-19)

"We only have one common enemy and that is COVID-19. Our transparency, integrity, accountability, and responsiveness are needed. As President, I assure you that the government will be on top of this situation at all times. We will not leave anyone behind."

- The President's statement, Talk to the People on COVID-19, March 24, 2020.

Photo Credit: PCOO

Chapter 1

Managing the Global Pandemic

Our world is at a crucial moment in history as humanity battles the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The global pandemic threatens our safety. It continues to disrupt and significantly alter our way of life. There has been no exact precedent and manual on winning this battle.

Before the pandemic struck, we had collectively worked hard to bring forth real long-term reforms toward a comfortable life for all Filipinos. These reforms provided us with the buffer we needed to tackle head-on our immense challenges.

When the COVID-19 struck our country with the

first-ever recorded case on January 30, 2020,[1] we already had in place social safety nets and mechanisms that could be scaled up to manage the pandemic. As the effects of the disease unfolded, I knew that the strength of our economy and our institutions could carry us through this challenge. Thus, I made the difficult decision — ***Bag-o ang tanan, buhay muna.***

As we continue to weather this storm, we remain steadfast and focused on addressing the most pressing needs of our people. To the best of our abilities, we shall improve our healthcare system to enable it to better serve our people; ensure that basic necessities and safety nets are accessible to all; and deliver essential government services to the public.

Responding to COVID-19

Following the confirmation of the first COVID-19 case, the government immediately imposed a travel ban on visitors coming from Wuhan City and the entire Hubei Province of China. Three days after our first confirmed case, on February 2, 2020, the government recorded its second case of the deadly virus within our jurisdiction, which was also tagged as the first COVID-19-related death in the Philippines and outside the virus-hit China.[2] On the same day, I declared a travel ban to and from China, including its special administrative regions, Hong Kong and Macau. It was a tough decision considering its impact on tourism and related businesses. However, I would always decide for the greater good of our people.

With the intention of halting the outbreak, we immediately implemented stricter health protocols. Establishments started checking the temperature of their guests and requested them to sanitize before entry. With these simple yet practical strategies, we momentarily managed to prevent the further spread of the virus in the country until the first local transmission was confirmed on March 7, 2020.[3] From then on, the cases grew, albeit at a relatively controlled pace.

On March 8, 2020, I issued Proclamation no. 922, declaring a State of Public Health Emergency throughout the country due to COVID-19. As the cases increased, I declared on March 16, 2020 a State of National Calamity for the next six months through Proclamation no. 929. Then, on March 17, 2020, upon the advice of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases

1 DOH Press Release, March 10, 2020.
2 World Health Organization, Situation Report-13, February 2, 2020.
3 DOH Press Release, March 7, 2020.

(IATF-MEID), I placed the entire Luzon under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ). This suspended classes in all levels and mass public transport facilities, prohibited mass gatherings, and imposed stricter home quarantines. Subsequently, we implemented community quarantines in other areas, mobilized healthcare facilities and resources, and enforced social distancing protocols within communities.[4]

With the overwhelming support of both houses of Congress, Republic Act (RA) no. 11469 or the ***Bayanihan* to Heal as One Act** was signed into law on March 24, 2020 to serve as the blueprint in our fight against COVID-19. I directed the IATF-MEID to respond accordingly to this highly evolving pandemic.[5] I also realigned PhP275 billion from the 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations for COVID-19 response.[6] Through the concerted *bayanihan* efforts of the government and the people, the multi-sectoral management and response to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the entire archipelago was placed in full swing.

Increasing Testing Capacity

To manage and combat COVID-19, we embarked on a Test, Trace, and Treat (T3) strategy. Fully aware of the need to improve our testing capabilities, I immediately directed our health officials to do everything within our means to obtain adequate medical supplies and the technology to be able to run tests on our own.

A member of the Philippine Coast Guard administers an RT-PCR swab to an OFW at the NAIA Terminal 2.
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

From just one testing laboratory at the start of the pandemic in January 2020, we have 91 accredited testing laboratories nationwide as of July 20, 2020.[7] Of this number, 68 are Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) licensed and 23 are Licensed Gene Xpert laboratories. A total of 92 laboratories are still undergoing certification.[8] While the National Capital Region (NCR) has the most number of licensed laboratories nationwide, more regional laboratories are on their way to becoming accredited.

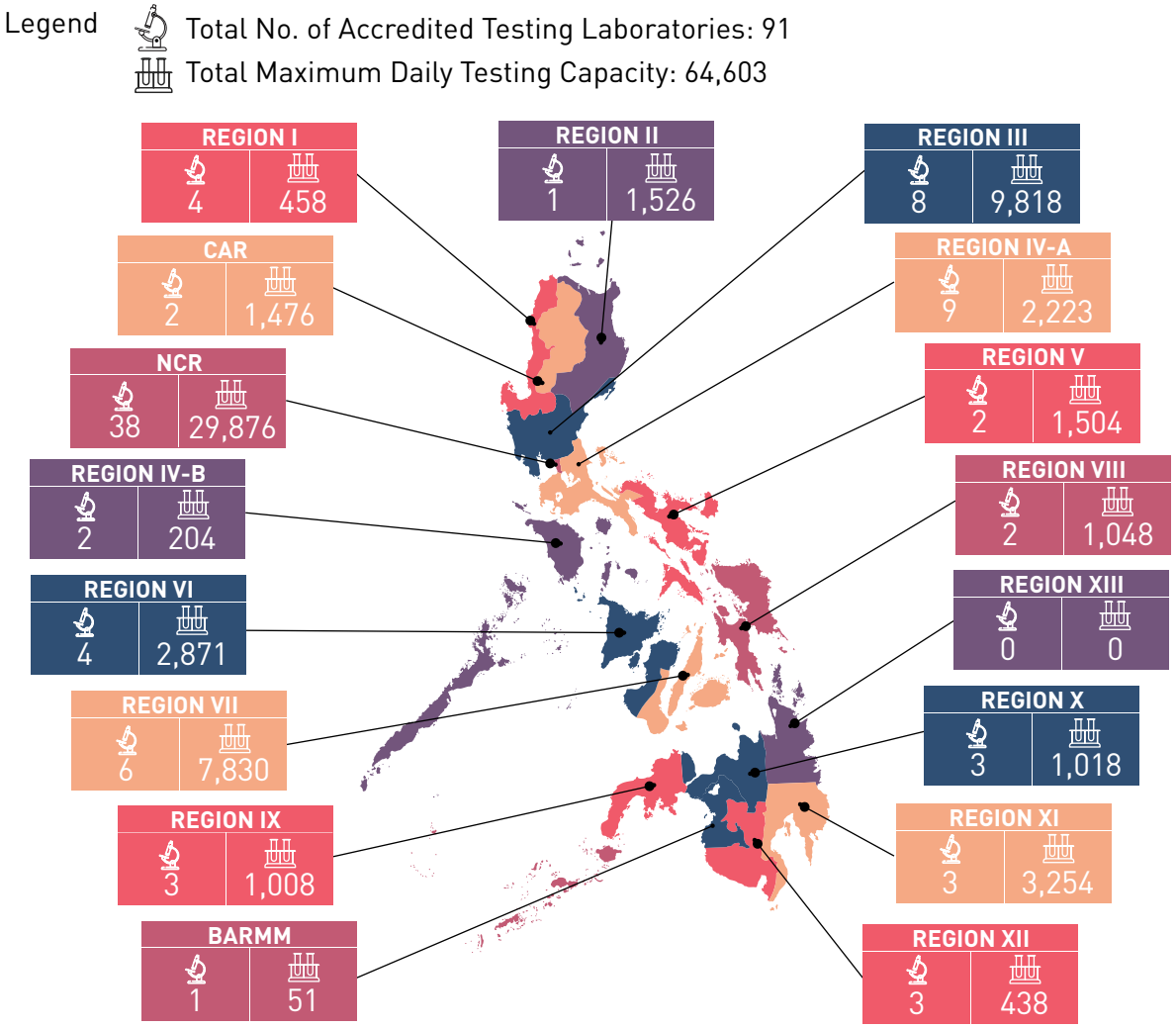
4 PNA, "No One Goes Hungry amid COVID-19 crisis," March 31, 2020.
5 IATF-MEID Resolution No. 01, January 28, 2020.
6 PNA, "No One Goes Hungry amid COVID-19 crisis," March 31, 2020.
7 DOH, July 21, 2020.
8 Ibid.

As our testing laboratories increased, we were also able to procure PCR kits. Out of the 252,951 ordered and awarded kits, 75,153 kits, which can be used to perform 4,119,416 tests, have been delivered to the government as of July 16, 2020. The remaining 177,798 kits, which can perform more than ten million tests, are ready for delivery.[9]

These efforts have accelerated the turn-around time of our COVID-19 testing from two weeks back in March to only 2-3 days starting June[10] and as of July 18, 2020.

To aid laboratories in collecting samples, we have set up mega swabbing centers by converting big venues meant for major gatherings, such as

Figure 1.1 **Accredited COVID-19 Testing Laboratories per Region (as of July 21, 2020)**



Source: DOH

9 NIC, NTF COVID-19, July 16, 2020.
10 BCDA, IATF-MEID Meeting, June 29, 2020.

Table 1.1 **List of Mega Swabbing Centers (as of July 15, 2020)**	
Mega Swabbing Center	**No. of Testing Booths**
Philippine Sports Stadium - Philippine Arena	96
Mall of Asia Arena	72
Palacio de Maynila	65
Enderun Tent	56

Source: NIC, NTF COVID-19

DOST Secretary Fortunato dela Peña with Dr. Raul Destura of the University of the Philippines- National Institutes of Health (UP-NIH), Dr. Teodoro Herbosa, Executive Vice President, UP, and Dr. Cynthia Saloma, Head of the Philippine Genome Center during the launching of UP-NIH test kits on March 12, 2020. *Photo Credit: DOST*

the Philippine Sports Stadium in the Philippine Arena, the Mall of Asia Arena, the Palacio de Maynila, and the Enderun Tent *(see Table 1.1)*.

I would like to commend the University of the Philippines (UP) for developing COVID-19 test kits, which are now being used across the country. To complement this effort and ensure the speedy collection of COVID-19 samples, we have established specimen collection booths developed by DOST research institutions and the department's partners in the academe and industry.[11]

Table 1.2 **COVID-19 Testing Capacity**		
	As of May 5, 2020	**As of July 20, 2020**
Accredited Testing Laboratories	23	91
• Maximum Testing Capacity per day	6,170	64,603
• Turn-around Time	2 to 3 days	
Highest Daily Testing Output	6,902	27,985
Total Tests Conducted	138,624	1,191,216
Unique Individual Tested	124,836	1,109,242
Remaining Test Supplies	233,390	2,325,422

Source: DOH

11 DOST, July 17, 2020.

As of July 20, 2020, a total of 1,191,216 tests have been conducted on 1,109,242 individuals[12] nationwide *(see Table 1.2)*. We are steadily ramping up our capacity to test more broadly for us to have a more accurate picture of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

Intensifying Contact Tracing

We are fully aware that contact tracing is crucial in controlling the spread of COVID-19 in communities. Thus, we instituted contact tracing efforts through the collaboration of our Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams, Local Government and Provincial Health Offices, and the DOH. Through this, we were able to map out the location of COVID-19 cases and identify hotspots and zones where new cases are emerging.

We are continuously stepping up our contact tracing efforts. As of July 15, 2020, we have organized 5,403 contact-tracing teams with 68,884 members.[13] We are also developing at least two contact-tracing applications: ***StaySafePH***, which enables people to report their health condition and possible exposures through their smartphones; and the ***Safe Pass***, an all-digital contact-free authorizing, business-scheduling, and contact-tracing solution, which helps offices and other establishments operate safely. As of July 20, 2020, some 166,466 close contacts of confirmed cases have been traced and assessed.[14]

Capacitating Treatment Hospital and Facilities

The imposition of community quarantines gave us time to build up the capacity of our medical facilities. As of July 20, 2020, there were 1,934 COVID-19 referral and accepting hospitals nationwide.[15] A total of 15,247 intensive care unit, isolation and ward beds and 1,896 mechanical ventilators have been dedicated for COVID-19 patients. As of July 20, 2020, about 51 percent of these beds and 26 percent of these ventilators were in use nationwide.[16]

As we continue to upgrade our hospitals' capacity, we need more healthcare professionals to help us in this fight. Hence, I directed the DOH to hire more healthcare workers to reinforce the frontlines. As of July 21, 2020, the DOH has hired 5,279 of the 8,694 positions in 307 facilities nationwide [17] *(see Table 1.3)*.

To equip our healthcare workers with the necessary tools, the government

12 DOH, COVID-19 Tracker, July 20, 2020.
13 NIC, NTF COVID-19, July 21, 2020.
14 Ibid.
15 DOH, COVID-19 Tracker, July 20, 2020.
16 Ibid.
17 DOH, HRH Augmentation Report No. 92, July 21, 2020.

partnered with the private sector to provide adequate personal protective and medical equipment. So far, the DOH has procured 6,316,849 personal protective equipment (PPE) sets, of which 2,689,122 or 43.89 percent have been delivered as of July 14, 2020.[18] The target completion of PPE deliveries is set on August 26, 2020. The DOH has also requested the DBM to procure 10.36 million sets of PPEs worth PhP20.72 billion for the next two to three months.[19]

Table 1.3 **Number of Human Resources for Health (HRH) Hired to Respond to COVID-19 Pandemic (as of July 21, 2020)**

HRH	Number
Deputized Physician	23
Nurse	1,985
Medical Technologist	840
Respiratory Therapist	121
Radiologic Technologist	204
Pharmacist	27
Nutritionist-Dietitian	5
Medical Specialist	83
Medical Officer	352
Others	1,639
Total	**5,279**

Source: DOH

National Action Plan against COVID-19 Chief Implementer Sec. Carlito Galvez Jr., and Deputy Chief Implementer PA Vince Dizon during a meeting with the SOCCSKSARGEN Regional IATF-MEID on May 26, 2020
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

The DOST has initiated and funded various projects to localize the production of equipment for the protection of our healthcare workers and treatment of COVID-19 patients. These include ventilators, sanitizing chambers, self-contained disinfecting cubicles, thermal scanners, face masks, and face shields.[20]

We directed our local chief executives to establish quarantine and isolation facilities. Local Isolation and General Treatment Areas for COVID-19 cases or simply called LIGTAS COVID were set up to serve as temporary treatment and monitoring facilities. These facilities are mainly dedicated for

18 DOH, July 17, 2020.
19 DBM, May 15, 2020.
20 DOST, July 17, 2020.

quarantine or isolation of suspected COVID-19 cases. As of July 20, 2020, the total bed capacity in community-managed LIGTAS COVID facilities was at 126,933 while the total bed capacity in Mega LIGTAS COVID facilities managed by the national government, which include the remodeled BRP Ang Pangulo and a port terminal, stood at 2,742[21] *(see Table 1.4)*.

Various health researches on the use of virgin coconut oil (VCO), *tawa-tawa*, *lagundi*, and high-dose melatonin as supplementary treatment for COVID-19, and bio-surveillance of disease transmission in the country were started by our local scientists from the DOST and local institutions.[22] The country is also participating in the WHO Solidarity Treatment Trials while five hospitals in

Table 1.4 **Mega LIGTAS COVID-19 Facilities (as of July 20, 2020)**

Facility	Location	Bed Capacity
Ninoy Aquino Stadium	Manila	112
Rizal Memorial Coliseum	Manila	97
Quezon Institute	Quezon City	112
Philippine International Convention Center (PICC)	Pasay City	208
World Trade Center	Pasay City	450
PhilSports Arena	Pasig City	132
Philippine Arena (Tent and Villa)	Bulacan	187
ASEAN Convention Center	Clark, Pampanga	120
National Government Administrative Center	New Clark City, Tarlac	360
NCC Athlete's Village (Buildings A and B)	New Clark City, Tarlac	369
Las Piñas Rehabilitation Center	Las Piñas City	55
Filinvest Tent	Muntinlupa City	103
Alonte Sports Complex	Biñan, Laguna	68
IC3 COVID-19 TTMF	Cebu City	130
Eva Macapagal Super Terminal	Pier 15, Manila	211
Presidential Yacht BRP Ang Pangulo (ACS-25)	Pier 13, Manila	28
Total		**2,742**

Sources: DOTr and NIC, NTF COVID-19

21 NIC, NTF COVID-19, July 21, 2020.
22 DOST, July 17, 2020.

Metro Manila and Cebu, namely, the Philippine General Hospital, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, Manila Doctors Hospital, San Lazaro Hospital, and Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center, will also serve as initial trial sites for vaccines undergoing clinical trial.[23]

Given the continuous increase in the number of cases, we are boosting our testing capacity for early detection, immediate isolation, and effective treatment. We are putting all our efforts together to ensure that our management and response to this emergency will continually improve towards a safer and healthier Philippines.

DILG Secretary Eduardo Año and Sec. Galvez inspect the first RT-PCR Test laboratory set up by the Philippine Red Cross in Mandaluyong City.
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

Cushioning the Impact of the Pandemic

The pandemic's challenges made me as resolute as ever in addressing the most pressing needs of our people. In the face of such a formidable public health emergency, the government has remained committed to ensure our peoples' survival with everything at our disposal.

The national government, together with the local government units (LGUs), the private sector, and other stakeholders worked collaboratively to carry out assistance programs to cushion the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in terms of food security and social safety nets. Empowered by *bayanihan* of the Filipino nation, we launched the largest and widest social protection program in the country's history.

Emergency Support for Vulnerable Groups and Individuals

Social Amelioration Program (SAP). The SAP was implemented to ensure the provision of safety nets, emergency subsidies, and other social protection programs to the impoverished sectors of the country and mitigate the socio-economic effects of the pandemic.

23 DOH Press Conference, July 8, 2020.

DSWD Secretary Rolando Joselito Bautista leads the distribution of emergency cash subsidy in Marikina City.
Photo Credit: DSWD

Under the SAP, we set aside PhP206 billion for poor and low-income households who were badly affected by the current pandemic, including the wage earners who thrive on a "no-work, no-pay" arrangement.[24]

Emergency Subsidy Program. This program provides cash or non-cash subsidy to around 18 million household beneficiaries ranging from PhP5,000 to PhP8,000 per month for two months for the purchase of basic food and medicine.[25]

For the first tranche, we provided cash subsidy to 17,651,960 household-beneficiaries, including 98,132 public utility vehicle drivers and operators. On June 11, 2020, we commenced the distribution of the second tranche, with payout to 2.50 million or 28.83 percent of the 8.67 million target-beneficiaries.[26] Likewise, 1.11 million or 17 percent of the 6.52 million target waitlisted or left out beneficiaries received their cash subsidy starting June 16, 2020.[27]

Learning from the challenges encountered during the distribution of the first tranche of cash aid, we launched the ***Relief Agad*** application on May 14, 2020 to facilitate faster and efficient automated cash aid distribution. We also tapped various financial service providers (FSPs) to facilitate digital payment of the emergency cash subsidy.[28]

Assistance to Senior Citizens. As of July 21, 2020, 2.75 million indigent senior citizens have been provided with PhP3,000 stipend each for the first semester of the current year.[29]

Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation. In addition to the SAP, we helped 274,805 individuals at the outset of community quarantine by providing them with medical, burial, food, transportation, educational, and other support services in the total amount of PhP1.18 billion.[30]

24 DSWD, July 16, 2020.
25 Ibid.
26 DSWD, July 22, 2020.
27 Ibid.
28 DSWD, July 16, 2020.
29 DSWD, July 22,2020.
30 Ibid.

COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP) for the Formal Sector. CAMP is a safety net program for affected formal sector workers, in the amount of PhP5,000. All 657,201 target affected workers were served as of May 20, 2020.[31]

Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Displaced/Disadvantaged Workers Barangay Ko, Bahay Ko Disinfection/ Sanitation Project (TUPAD #BKBK). TUPAD #BKBK is a community-based safety net program that provides temporary wage employment to the informal economy and displaced marginalized workers who lost their livelihood or whose earnings were compromised due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have served all the 337,198 target beneficiaries under the program as of June 1, 2020.[32]

Financial Subsidy for Rice Farmers Program (FSRF). FSRF is a one-time financial assistance program, providing P5,000.00 to rice farmers with farm sizes ranging from one hectare and below. We provided PhP3 billion worth of assistance to 591,246[33] target farmer beneficiaries.[34]

Survival and Recovery (SURE) Assistance Program for Marginalized, Small Farmers and Fishers (MSFFs). SURE Aid is a zero percent interest rate loan assistance given to eligible borrowers affected by the implementation of the ECQ. Borrowers may apply for a loan amounting to a maximum of PhP25,000. As of July 21, 2020, 31,497 MSFFs or 78.74 percent of the 40,000 target beneficiaries have been provided with PhP788 million in total loans.[35]

CAMP beneficiaries receive their financial assistance.
Photo Credit: DOLE

Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project (SURE COVID-19) for Agri-Based Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). We also intensified the provision of concessionary loans to our affected MSEs. As of July 21, 2020, we have served 93 MSEs or 62 percent of 150 target beneficiaries with loans totaling PhP645.85 million.[36]

31 DOLE, July 17, 2020.
32 Ibid.
33 This includes assistance given to farmer beneficiaries since February 2020, DA, July 18, 2020.
34 DA, July 18, 2020.
35 DA, July 22, 2020.
36 Ibid.

"Natanggap na po namin ang ayudang galing po sa ating DA. Pinapaabot po namin ang taos-puso naming pasasalamat. Malaking tulong po ito sa aming pamilya."

Sharon Baluto, Member, Pury Rice Farmers' Association, San Antonio, Quezon

Photo Credit: DA

Small Business Wage Subsidy Program. Under the program, we provided a wage subsidy ranging from PhP5,000 to PhP8,000 (based on the regional minimum wage) per month to low- to medium-middle class eligible employees. Under the first and second tranches of the program, all target beneficiaries numbering 3.09 million employees and 3.06 million employees were served, respectively.[37]

30-Day Grace Period for Loans and Rent. To help ease the financial burden of Filipinos during these difficult times, I directed all lenders to grant a 30-day grace period or extension for the payment of all loans, including credit card payments and pawnshop loans, falling due within the ECQ period, without slapping interest or any additional charges and fees on the borrowers.

Ensuring Food and Water Security

At the onset of the pandemic, one of my priority concerns was ensuring people's access to food and water. We immediately pursued measures to secure food supply and mitigate the pandemic's impact across the food value chain.

Maintaining the Unhampered Flow of Goods and Essential Supplies

To minimize disruption in the food value chain, we issued an order on March 19, 2020 to facilitate the unhampered movement of all cargoes,

37 DOF, June 27, 2020.

agriculture and fishery inputs, food products, and agribusiness personnel nationwide, and the continuance of farming and fishing activities.[38]

To expedite the movement of food and agri-fishery products from production areas to consumer areas, we issued 253,332 Food Passes and Local Transport Permits to delivery trucks and other vehicles transporting these products. The food pass is a privilege given to suppliers and truckers that go to, from, and/or through Metro Manila and other regions to ensure their free movement. We also launched the DA-Hotline 1381 (AGRI) to help with concerns related to movement of agri-fishery products and inputs.[39]

In addition, we made sure that 126 ports nationwide continued to operate, and adopted port emergency measures for the uninterrupted flow of import cargo at the Manila International Container Terminal. From March 25 to July 10, 2020, we facilitated 38,189 flights to ensure the uninterrupted supply of food, medicine, and other essential goods.[40]

Ensuring Food Accessibility and Availability[41]

Aside from emergency subsidies, we ensured adequate supply of rice for every Filipino household. Due to our management of the rice supply, we did not experience any shortage during this lean season despite the public health emergency. We project that at year's end, we will still have an ending rice inventory of 78-94 days.

With the nationwide implementation of community quarantines, we immediately released rice to the DSWD and LGUs. From March 16 to June 23, 2020, the NFA distributed 223,484 metric tons or 4.47 million bags of rice nationwide.

Through the Food Resiliency Action Plan, the DA ensured the availability of food supplies by minimizing supply chain disruption. The plan takes into consideration Metro Manila's weekly demand for basic food commodities.

To ensure the availability of food especially in areas still under community quarantine, while at the same time marketing the products of local farmers, we extended the *Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita* (KADIWA) Program in other areas of the country. KADIWA is a market system, which sells major agricultural goods at reasonably low prices to help poor Filipino households. Under the KADIWA program, the total value of commodities traded amounted to PhP302.63 million.

38 DA, July 18, 2020.
39 Ibid.
40 DOTr, July 18, 2020.
41 DA, July 18, 2020.

KADIWA ni Ani at Kita Online (wholesale fruits and vegetables market online)

- Served **five cities** in NCR and **242 municipalities** nationwide

KADIWA ni Ani at Kita Retail Selling

- Operated in **seven DA locations** within NCR and Rizal, and **880 municipalities** nationwide and sold agri-fishery products worth PhP34.84 million

***KADIWA* Express**

- Delivered **122.33 Metric Tons (MT) of assorted commodities** from various trading centers to designated drop off points in NCR

eKADIWA *(an online delivery platform)*

- Served **700 Metro Manila households** by delivering fresh produce, right at the doorsteps of consumers

KADIWA IsDA on the Go (provides the identified market outlets with steady fish supply at reasonable prices)

- Sold **54.024 MT of fish** amounting to PhP9.3 million benefitting **191,847 families** since April 2020

KADIWA Diskwento Karavan (KDK)

- Served **39,276 households** and sold **37.30 MT of agri-fishery products** valued at PhP9.4 million

Source: DA

We also implemented the Urban Agriculture Program (UAP) aimed at securing safe food for families in urban areas and urging people to engage in urban gardening. Under this program, we provided assorted vegetable seeds, seedlings, and starter kits to affected urban areas in almost all regions, and training on urban vegetable gardening, aquaponics, hydroponics, value chain, and agri-preneurship.[42] As of June 2020, the UAP has served about 387,154 households.[43]

In addition, food packs and essential non-food items have been provided to LGUs nationwide for distribution to their constituents. As of July 21, 2020, 1.44 million food packs have been distributed.[44]

To protect consumers from hoarding, profiteering and price manipulation, we reactivated local price councils to enforce the Suggested Retail Price (SRP) scheme and price freeze in Metro Manila for agriculture and fishery and other basic commodities. We also enforced measures to curtail hoarding and profiteering.[45]

Our *Bantay Presyo* Task Force continues to enforce RA no. 7581 or The Price Act throughout the country. The group monitors and enforces SRPs of basic food commodities, such as rice, fish, chicken, pork, sugar, cooking oil, garlic, and onion in major markets nationwide.[46]

42 DA, July 18, 2020.
43 DA, July 19, 2020.
44 DSWD, July 22,2020.
45 DA, July 18, 2020.
46 Ibid.

DA Secretary William Dar (rightmost) and DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez (third from right) jointly inspect wet markets in Metro Manila to monitor compliance of vendors with the SRPs and price freeze on basic commodities.
Photo Credit: DA

Assuring Adequate Water and Energy Supply

To ensure continuous water supply in the country, the government immediately adopted measures to conserve and regulate water supply. We initiated cloud seeding operations in the Angat Water Reservoir and directed the Metropolitan Water Works and Sewerage System (MWSS) to continue the activation of its existing deep wells.[47] Similarly, the government allowed the automatic extension of all existing water treatment storage facilities for more than 60 days, especially for those whose registrations expired during the ECQ period.

We also ensured that the country's energy supply remains equally adequate. As of July 22, 2020, our major power grids maintained excess capacity over peak demand in the three power grids located in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

While doing all these, the government ordered all water and power concessionaires and service providers not to implement supply disconnection, especially during the ECQ *(see Table 1.5)*.

Table 1.5 **Power and Demand Capacity (as of July 22, 2020)**

	Actual Peak Demand (MW*)	Available Capacity (MW)	Excess Capacity (MW)
Luzon	10,302	11,587	1,285
Visayas	1,835	2,466	631
Mindanao	1,776	2,761	985

Source: DOE
**megawatt*

47 NWRB, June 20, 2020.

We also directed them to verify the consumers' actual consumption patterns with observed discrepancies for necessary adjustments.

Finally, we urged all water and power concessionaires and service providers to partner with the government in the spirit of *bayanihan* by allowing the staggered payment of bills, cognizant of the fact that the implementation of community quarantines nationwide has greatly affected the livelihood of many Filipino households.

Providing Essential Services to the People

Alongside our efforts to manage the health pandemic and its effects on our people, the government is continuously providing essential services for the safety, security, and comfort of all.

Assistance to Frontline Workers

I sincerely thank our medical frontline workers—our first line of defense in our fight against this global pandemic. ***Saludo kami sa inyo***. We honor your invaluable contributions, hardwork, and dedication, which saved countless lives. Your efforts are the backbone of the country's health system; and I will ensure that the national government is with you in safeguarding the welfare of our people in your communities.

To ease the burden of commuting to work during the community quarantine, I directed all agencies concerned to deploy their transport resources for the use of our healthcare workers. As of July 22, 2020, the government has transported 1,590,549 health workers nationwide. Furthermore, from only four hospitals with dedicated buses on April 2, 2020, the DOTr has now provided 12 major hospitals in NCR with dedicated shuttle services.[48] Likewise, we implemented the ***RapidPassPH*** System on April 9, 2020 to expedite the movement of health workers at designated checkpoints in the metro.[49]

Aside from addressing the transportation needs of our modern-day heroes, the government has provided PhP100,000 each to 19 health workers who have contracted severe COVID-19 infection while in line of duty; and PhP1 million each to the surviving families of health workers who have succumbed to the deadly virus.[50]

Moreover, as of June 15, 2020, the GSIS has processed six *Bayanihan* Frontliners Fund (BFF) claims amounting to PhP3 million. The BFF provides an additional insurance coverage of

48 DOTr, April 2, 2020 and July 22, 2020, and MMDA and AFP, July 22, 2020.
49 DICT, RapidPassPH System Technical Report, July 15, 2020.
50 Report to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, June 15, 2020.

PhP500,000 to 27,682 frontliners from March 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.[51]

Finally, as of June 18, 2020, special risk allowances in the amount of PhP246.69 million have been distributed to DOH personnel, 25,692 of whom are regular employees and 6,241 were hired under contracts of service.[52]

Access to Information and Vital Communications

In my regular talks to the nation, I and my fellow workers in the Cabinet have been very transparent with our strategies and plans because the people's cooperation matters the most. We provided details and context of the COVID-19 situation in simple and easily understandable terms because, in this fight, no one should be left behind.

I had long instructed the DOH to give daily updates on statistics through live briefings, online publications, and strong partnership with the press for widest dissemination possible. In the same vein, the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) utilized radio, television, social media, and other online platforms to explain new guidelines and developments relative to community quarantines nationwide and other procedures being implemented by the government in our fight against the pandemic.

Members of the Philippine Coast Guard prepare their PPEs at the Mega Swabbing Facility in the Palacio de Maynila.
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

Enforcement of Law and Order

We have witnessed how the global pandemic caused widespread riots in other countries. To prevent this situation in our country, I have mobilized our soldiers and police to ensure that law and order will be upheld amidst this health pandemic.

Contingent from the Philippine Navy preparing to serve the Philippine Arena Mega Swabbing Facility
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

51 Report to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, June 15, 2020.
52 Report to the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, June 22, 2020.

In the same spirit, I do not tolerate those who take advantage of this situation, particularly those who hoard and manipulate the price of essential goods and services and take cash aids that are intended to feed our hungry countrymen.

Elected officials, city hall personnel, and barangay staff are among those who have been charged for anomalies in SAP cash aid distribution.[53] Local chief executives were also asked to explain their poor performance in distributing the cash aid. I will never allow acts of corruption and grave abuses of discretion, most especially in crucial times like this.

Figure 1.3 **Show Cause Orders and Charges vs. LGU Officials and Personnel (as of July 6, 2020)**

406

LGU officials facing criminal complaints for alleged mishandling of SAP cash aid distribution, 178 of whom are elected, and the rest are LGU personnel

166

barangay officials facing administrative cases for alleged violations of IATF-MEID guidelines and protocols, such as holding public gatherings and illegal gambling amid the pandemic

Source: DILG

Figure 1.2 **Apprehensions for Price Manipulation and Hoarding (as of July 11, 2020)**

974

Price Act violators arrested

PhP118.09

million worth of items confiscated

Source: DTI

Protection and Support for Displaced OFWs

Our Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) were among the hardest hit by the onslaught of COVID-19. I understand their fear and uncertainty during these times of great adversity. I hope that our stimulus plan will alleviate their plight. We shall continue to provide them all the assistance they need to start over here or abroad.

As of July 22, 2020, we have repatriated 96,874 OFWs; of whom, 42,174 were seafarers and 54,700 were land-based workers.[54] As soon as our OFWs set foot in the country, we have them undergo rapid tests to ensure that they are COVID-19-free. As they await the results, the DOT and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) provide room accommodation while the DOH offers free mental health

53 DILG, July 03, 2020.
54 DFA, July 22, 2020.

services to help them adjust to drastic changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The DOTr then transports them to their respective provinces through the *Hatid Probinsya Para Sa OFWs* Program.[55]

The sudden loss of income is the biggest challenge to repatriated OFWs. To give them opportunities to start over, we implemented the DOLE CAMP-*Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong sa* OFWs (CAMP-AKAP) wherein each repatriated OFW was given PhP10,000. As of July 22, 2020, 86,070 repatriated OFWs received the said cash assistance. For those who opted to stay abroad, the government extended a one-time cash assistance of US$200 under the CAMP-AKAP for On-site OFWs. As of July 22, 2020, 122,994 OFWs have been assisted through this program.[56]

Our OFWs can also take part in TESDA's Online Program, an alternative mode of learning with 71 free online courses to effectively assist them to transition to jobs that are highly in-demand in these times. The free skills training provided by TESDA increases the chances of our displaced workers, including our returning OFWs, to be absorbed into the economy again. Moreover, as part of the government's reintegration program for returning OFWs, the TESDA will tap them as technical experts or technical-vocational trainers on emerging and advanced technologies in the country.[57]

"Salamat sa astig na accommodation, OWWA!"

- Jayson Rolle, 34 years old, repatriated OFW from Saudi Arabia

I also urged the CHED and TESDA, in coordination with the DOLE and OWWA, to come up with a special scholarship program for qualified dependents of our OFWs. I also asked the DA to come up with appropriate agri-business projects to help displaced OFWs under the agency's *Plant, Plant, Plant* Program. Further, I asked the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) and other government financial institutions to continue providing low-interest loans to our OFWs.

55 DOTr, July 16, 2020.
56 DOLE, July 22, 2020.
57 TESDA, July 10, 2020.

Way Forward: A Whole-of-Nation Approach in Managing COVID-19

The health emergency has indeed disrupted our way of life but it shall never dampen our spirit. In fact, it has fortified our solidarity as a people.

We find inspiration from such unity to continue improving our approach in managing this pandemic. We have learned a lot and will address our weaknesses to make things better for future generations. An evolving crisis such as this requires us to utilize a dynamic, inclusive, and holistic approach.

The LGUs have been placed in the best position to address the COVID-19 situation in their jurisdictions through the declaration of a National State of Calamity or Proclamation no. 929. This proclamation granted them access to resources needed to overcome this crisis and undertake urgent measures to help their constituents.[58] While most of our LGUs have adequately demonstrated readiness to handle greater responsibilities during this pandemic, I am extremely displeased that some local government officials have failed their constituents. Be that as it may, I earnestly hope that this experience serves as a wake-up call for all local and national government officials to be more accountable in the management and response to disasters.

I acknowledge that the government cannot single-handedly fight the pandemic. It entails a concerted effort from all of us. The cooperation of everyone is needed as we maintain a heightened sense of urgency, reinforce our systems, and change our lifestyles towards the next normal.

In this difficult time, rest assured that your government is here with you. With the adversities that we face, we are called, now more than ever, to stand together in faith, prayer, and unity. I am confident that we will surmount this challenge through our resilience and solidarity. ***Padayon ta.***

The President's Talk to the People on COVID-19, July 7, 2020
Photo Credit: PCOO

58 Proclamation no. 929, Declaring a State of Calamity Throughout the Philippines Due to Coronavirus Disease 2019, Official Gazette, March 16, 2020.

"I'd like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping us provide the necessities of the moment. *Naubos na po yung pagkasuplado ko dahil sa* COVID. The COVID humbled me with the kind of response that you gave, showed to the public."

- The President's Talk to the People, May 04, 2020

Photo Credit: Benyu Friends, UST

Chapter 2

Reinforcing the Spirit of *Bayanihan*

Bayanihan stands for our culture's most essential value of working together to achieve a common goal for the common good.

Thus, our clarion call - the ***Bayanihan* to Heal as One Act, or the Bayanihan Act**, which, after thorough and careful preparation by our legislators, I signed into law on March 24, 2020 as Republic Act no. 11469. The law was named befitting of what it symbolizes. Passed in record time, the law is in itself a testament of *bayanihan* between the executive and the legislative branches of government.

The *Bayanihan* Act is our testament of national solidarity. It upholds our timeless Filipino value of taking care of each other in times of need, especially those who are sick, vulnerable, and unable to sustain themselves and their families during this difficult time in our life as a nation.

Heroes in Our Midst

In the spirit of *bayanihan*, many heroic individuals answered our call for help and cooperation. Foremost are our kind and strong-hearted health workers, to whom we owe our deepest gratitude. Their sacrifices are invaluable, and the services they are selflessly and tirelessly rendering for our country will be etched forever in our memories and hearts. It is only right to rally behind and give the necessary support to them, our heroes.

Opening of the Philippine Arena, the largest of the four Mega Swabbing Facilities established by government in partnership with the private sector.
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

"Our countrymen are our most potent weapons in this war against COVID-19."[59]
Photo Credit: PCOO

We know their sacrifice is priceless. We only want them to know that their government is here for them. In fact, I have declared the year 2020 as the "Year of Filipino Health Workers" through Proclamation no. 976, which I signed last July 6, in recognition of the vital role of our health workers.

Also worthy of praise are our other frontliners in these extraordinary times. I refer to the players in our country's food supply chain such as the farmers, fishers, producers, transporters to include cargo handlers and drivers, retailers, food vendors; our social and barangay workers

59 President Duterte in a televised speech after the March16, 2020 Meeting with the IATF-MEID at the Malacañan Palace.

who helped distribute financial and relief assistance to our poorest and most needy; the valiant soldiers and policemen who ensured peace and order in our communities; the personnel manning our government offices to render frontline services to the public; the people who kept open our supermarkets and groceries, food businesses like fastfood chains and restaurants, delivery services, banks, gasoline stations, and many other essential establishments; and the garbage collectors who risked their own health to help manage our waste and prevent health and environmental issues.

There are also the noble volunteers augmenting our frontliners; and the good-hearted, indefatigable civil society organizations doing humanitarian work and calling for contributions to support our COVID-19 efforts. For all your selflessness and kindness, thank you.

A PGH frontliner inspects his goggles before resuming his duties.
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

Health workers and other frontliners at the Golden Gate Batangas Hospital receive PPE donations
Photo Credit: Benyu Friends

LGUs Step Up to the Plate

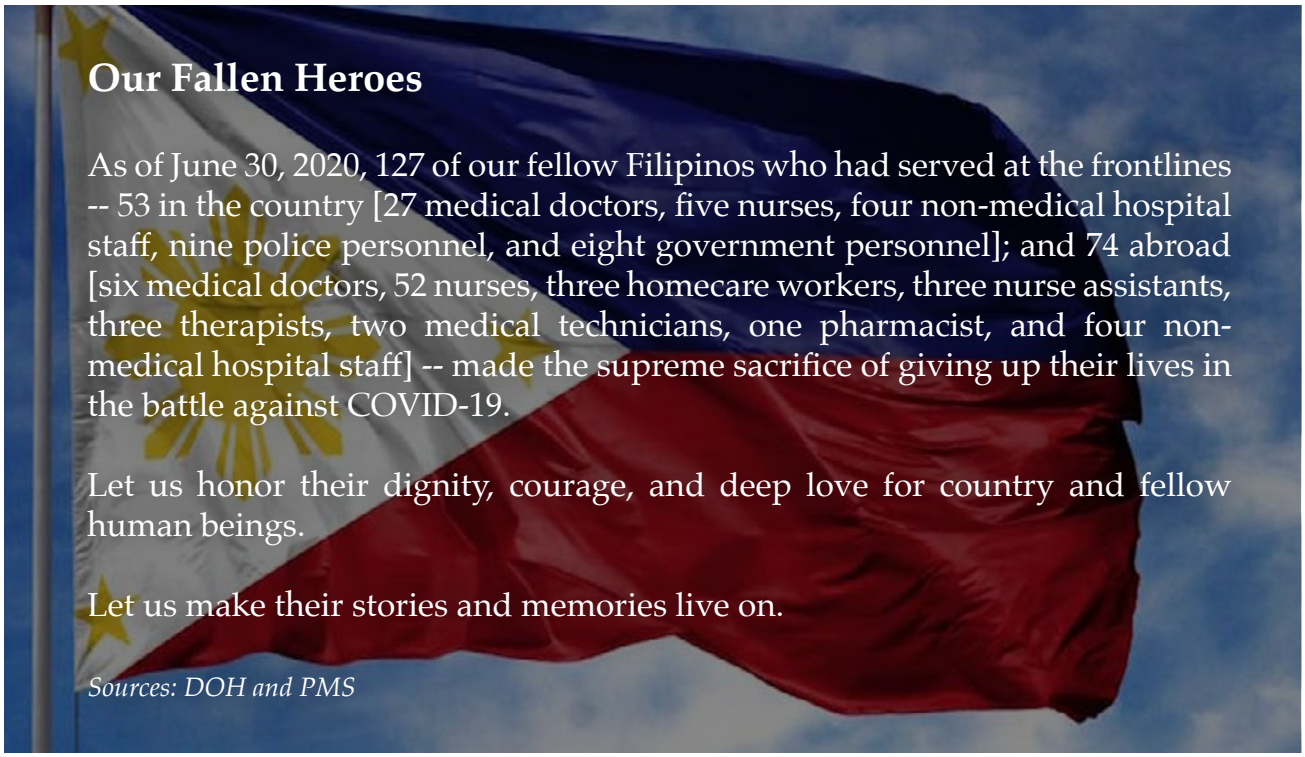
The spirit of *bayanihan* also pushed our LGUs, especially the mayors and barangay leaders, to initiate their own response measures to contain the effects of COVID-19 and its impact to their constituents. Many have heeded my call to implement urgent measures and utilized resources to protect our poor and most vulnerable. I thank those among them who ensured that no one is left behind.

I also recognize the LGUs who properly and promptly distributed our emergency cash aid and relief assistance to support the daily food and basic medical needs of the poorest and most vulnerable among their constituents. More than this, I commend their initiatives including

their Market on Wheels or Mobile *Palengke*, Mobile *Botika*, Mobile Kitchen, *Libreng Sakay*, Gadgets *Pang Eskwela*, Internet Connectivity down to the Barangay programs, and more. Some of them even harvested their own palay, vegetables, livestock, poultry, and marine products like shrimp, bangus and tilapia from their ponds, while others auctioned their precious personal possessions, including their shoes and more, to bring aid to their needy constituents.

These efforts not only nourished our people during these hard times, but also allowed them their daily dose of vitamins and maintenance medicines, and brought health workers and other frontliners to their workplaces to save lives. They also ensured the access of poor students to online information and continuing education amidst the crisis. Our LGUs' strict implementation of quarantine protocols, conduct of training and awareness on COVID-19, disinfection and misting operations in public places, capacity enhancement of locally-funded hospitals and clinics through the immediate purchase of needed medical and testing equipment, medicines, supplements and PPEs, contact tracing and massive mass testing, and the establishment of quarantine or isolation and accommodation facilities in their localities have helped immensely in containing the spread of the disease.

For all these, I express my gratitude to our local government officials and personnel for being with us at the forefront of this fight against our common enemy -- the COVID-19.



Our Fallen Heroes

As of June 30, 2020, 127 of our fellow Filipinos who had served at the frontlines -- 53 in the country [27 medical doctors, five nurses, four non-medical hospital staff, nine police personnel, and eight government personnel]; and 74 abroad [six medical doctors, 52 nurses, three homecare workers, three nurse assistants, three therapists, two medical technicians, one pharmacist, and four non-medical hospital staff] -- made the supreme sacrifice of giving up their lives in the battle against COVID-19.

Let us honor their dignity, courage, and deep love for country and fellow human beings.

Let us make their stories and memories live on.

Sources: DOH and PMS

A Solid Partnership

The current crisis is a test of our solidarity and resilience as a people and nation. As such, it is most reassuring to see our private sector rising up to the challenge by partnering with the government as it addresses the crisis. They offered their support to various entities at the frontline of our battle against COVID-19 in so many ways — from cash donations for the production of more coronavirus test kits; provision of diagnostic kits, alcohol, and PPE to hospitals and health centers, and free shuttle services for health workers and other exempted persons; and raising of funds to acquire tents for use as isolation centers, and help workers in the informal sector, which some celebrities have spearheaded; to big businesses helping ensure sufficient supply of food and basic necessities and heeding the government's appeal to provide workers and employees their respective salaries and benefits during the community quarantine without charging them against their leave credits.[60]

Our country's big businesses were among the early responders when we implemented the lockdown in Luzon and key cities of the Philippines. San Miguel Corporation President Ramon Ang assured me that the company would help ensure sufficient supply of food and basic necessities while the government handled the COVID-19 situation.

Opening of the Palacio de Maynila swabbing center
Photo Credit: NIC, NTF COVID-19

To address the need for spaces and beds to accommodate COVID-19 patients, the MVP Group of Companies partnered with the DPWH to make available a 300-bed COVID-19 mega-treatment facility at the Philippine Arena Complex owned by the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (INC) in Bocaue, Bulacan. Meanwhile, in partnership with the Ayala Group of Companies, the World Trade Center was also converted into a quarantine facility that could house 494 patients. These quarantine facilities, and many other similar but smaller-scale COVID-19 facilities, augmented our hospitals' capacity and capability to contain COVID-19.

60 Among the big businesses are San Miguel Corporation Group of Companies, Aboitiz Group of Companies, Asian/Terminal Hotel, Ayala Group of Companies, JG Summit/Gokongwei Group of Companies, Jollibee Group of Companies, Lucio Tan Group of Companies, Manuel V. Pangilinan Group of Companies, and SM Group of Companies. From "Private Sector's COVID-19 Response Overwhelms Palace," by Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos, 19 March 2020, Philippine News Agency.

Our partners in the business community have since been working with the government to see avenues and means we can collaborate to address the impact of COVID-19 and move our nation forward.

I know that there are many more private companies and individuals offering their resources and services to partner with our government. I thank them for their generosity.

Good Deeds from Good Samaritans

Since the onset of the community quarantine last March, even with work, classes and transportation suspended, "Good Samaritans" — companies, groups and individuals, big and small, public and private, professionals and volunteers, young and old, of whatever creed and color — have come out of the comforts of their homes, workplaces, churches, schools so they can give their donations nationwide, in cash or in kind, to the needy and the most vulnerable, health workers and other frontliners, hospitals and health facilities, displaced informal workers, residents of affected communities, and locally stranded individuals, among others.

There has been an outpouring of food and nourishment assistance that include sacks of rice, assorted meats and vegetables, meal packs, grocery packs, relief bags, and mobile kitchens. Lactating mothers launched their breast milk drive to feed the needy infants. Even drug companies and other generous individuals distributed vitamins and medicines for those with existing medical conditions.

Business tycoons together with volunteer groups of scientists, doctors, nurses, medical technologists, engineers and architects, donated cash and in kind in the form of respirators and testing machines, booths and kits, quarantine or isolation facilities, and medical tents with free professional services to sustain the COVID-19 operations of the DOH, hospitals, clinics, and LGUs nationwide.

Fashion designers, artists, dressmakers, housewives, and students pooled their resources and their talents to create and deliver the much-needed PPE for health workers, other frontliners, COVID-positive patients, and those exposed and are under monitoring.

Owners of hotels and similar establishments offered free and/or discounted accommodations for healthworkers and returning OFWs while oil, gas, transport companies, and private car owners generously offered free fuel, transportation and even free driving services for healthworkers and other frontliners,

and for stranded and vulnerable citizens.

Doctors and psychologists offered free telemedical consultations and counselling services for those affected and stressed out by the pandemic, and also to keep them at home.

To ensure continuous learning and education even during the pandemic, there were those who provided essential equipment such as laptops, tablets, and wi-fi internet connections for schools and poor students.

I am deeply thankful to all of you with generous hearts.

I also express my deep appreciation for the benevolence of members of the private sector who have chosen to forfeit profit to help the government and the nation in our fight to overcome COVID-19.

SM Group

- Mobilized over **PhP300 million** financial resources for COVID-19 efforts
- Provided **PhP100 million** worth of PPEs: full protective coveralls, face shields, medical gloves, KN95 masks, surgical masks, goggles, and other supplies
- Donated some 20 ICU-grade ventilators, three digital X-ray machines, and one ultrasound machine to various hospitals
- Donated **PhP10 million in cash** to the Philippine General Hospital, and laboratory supplies
- Made COVID-19 testing more widely accessible by **providing RT-PCR test kits**, worth over 20,000 tests, to hospitals and LGUs; and in partnership with Uniqlo, donated GenAmplify RT-PCR test kits, locally developed by UP-NIH scientists
- Built **six (6) Emergency Quarantine Facilities** in police and military camps in less than 10 days
- Conducted **relief operations** with Uniqlo to distribute 17,000 Kalinga packs to indigent families across 80 poor communities
- Brought farmers' produce directly to markets through the SM Development Corporation
- Provided over **PhP15 million worth of merienda** to healthcare workers in over 100 hospitals, in partnership with Goldilocks
- Made the **Mall of Asia Arena a "mega swabbing center"** in partnership with the Philippine Red Cross and the national government

Source: SM Group COVID-19 Response Report Card, June 2020

San Miguel Corporation

- Donated **PhP1.24 billion** in cash and response packages worth **PhP13.1 billion**
- Released, in advance, **PhP8.77 billion** in tax payments
- Paid out **PhP3.09 billion** for full salaries and compensation of its employees and third-party suppliers
- Distributed **PhP506.1 million worth of food items**, including rice, canned goods, poultry products, fresh meats, flour, bread, biscuits, milk, coffee
- Donated **PhP97.1 million worth of alcohol** to hospitals, government offices and parishes nationwide
- Provided over **PhP500 million** in emergency medical response fund for PPEs and other medical donations
- Personal donation of President and CEO Ramon S. Ang to Project *Ugnayan*: **PhP100 million**

Source: San Miguel Corporation Report on COVID-19 Response Package, June 2020

Ayala Group of Companies

- Contributed over **PhP9 billion** to COVID-19 response efforts
- Converted the World Trade Center into a facility for COVID-19 related cases in seven days in partnership with the Investment and Capital Corporation of the Philippines (ICCP), DPWH, and others
- Paid in advance **PhP9.86 billion** in taxes
- Donated **swabbing booths** for the government's four mega swabbing centers in Palacio de Maynila, the Enderun Colleges in Taguig City, Philippine Arena in Bulacan, and the Mall of Asia in Pasay City
- Converted its QualiMed hospital in Nuvali, Santa Rosa, Laguna into a **COVID-19 referral center**
- Built and capacitated seven (7) Biosafety Level-2 labs around the country, thereby providing an additional capacity of 5,500 RT-PCR tests/day

Source: Ayala Group Report on COVID-19 Efforts and Initiatives Tracker, June 2020

Manny V. Pangilinan Group of Companies

- Donated about **PhP6.5 billion** worth of COVID-19-related assistance
- Provided virus specimen collection kits, PPEs, medicine, relief goods (food and alcohol), face masks, water supplies, as well as transportation services for medical frontliners
- Released, in advance, **PhP15 billion** in taxes and concession fees
- PLDT Smart Group donated cash, food and grocery packs, PPEs, tents, communications services and facilities for COVID facilities, hospital and police/army personnel and displaced people in various areas.
- Provided **top-quality care for COVID-19 patients** through its 16 hospitals and sent volunteer nurses to assist other hospitals
- Provided **free speed boosts** for Fiber internet customers, more data services for mobile phone subscribers, deferred payments, and suspended disconnections
- Assisted in setting up temporary **healthcare facilities and mega-quarantine sites** in the Philippine Arena, World Trade Center, ASEAN Convention Center, Philippine International Convention Center, and the Ninoy Aquino Stadium

Source: MVP Group Report on COVID-19 Assistance, June 2020

Aboitiz and Company

- Contributed over **PhP1.85 billion** to help government, frontliners, and communities deal with the COVID-19 crisis
- Donated **PhP100 million** to Project Ugnayan, which fed around 7.6 million people, provided food donations and essential medical supplies for frontliners in hospitals, agencies, and LGUs
- Aided stranded passengers at seaports and provided livelihood to small and micro-entrepreneurs
- Provided **food supply for COVID-19 patients and frontliners** assigned in some quarantine facilities in Metro Manila; donated **PhP3 million** to help set-up quarantine facilities in Cebu; and distributed over 4,000 rapid test kits in Batangas
- Ensured uninterrupted power supply and electrification of critical industries, communities, hospitals and other facilities, while extending payment terms for customers

Source: Aboitiz Group COVID-19 Response Initiatives Report, June 2020

Nestlé Philippines

- Implemented the **PhP500 million *Kasambuhay* program** to assist one million families and thousands of frontliners, others in need of healthcare, and its employees and business partners
- Provided ***Kasambuhay* kits** consisting of Nestle products, in cooperation with LGUs and non-government organizations (NGOs) for their distribution
- Contributed **PhP10 million** to the Philippine Red Cross to help set up testing laboratories and purchase medical tents, PPEs, test kits, ventilators, respirators, surgical masks, and other essential health equipment

Source: Nestle Report on Kasambuhay ng Pamilya Pilipino Program to address COVID-19, June 2020

Jollibee Group

- Donated **PhP220 million worth of food** to help frontliners and families cope through the COVID-19 pandemic
- Allocated **PhP1 billion in emergency response fund** to provide its employees with the needed financial support
- Brought **1.3 million meals** directly to healthcare workers in hospitals and healthcare centers, as well as on-ground personnel and frontliners from different local government units
- Cooked and distributed meals through over 900 stores of the Jollibee Group such as Jollibee, Chowking, Mang Inasal, Red Ribbon, Greenwich, Burger King, Panda Express, and PHO24
- Distributed **2.5 million meals** to some 500,000 severely affected families. These meals were brought directly to the doorsteps of the homes of these families through the help of some 76 partner NGOs and institutions of the Jollibee Group throughout the country
- Provided free shuttle service to store teams, vitamin supplements, access to online medical and mental health consultations

Source: Jollibee Group Report on COVID-19 Initiatives, June 2020

National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP)

- Distributed **PhP1 billion worth of goods to over 1,000 LGUs, and PPEs and medical supplies** to over 300 hospitals and city/municipal or rural health units
- Turned over brand new **ambulances, mechanical ventilators, portable x-ray machines, ultrasound machines, PCR machines, PPEs, disinfecting solutions, and infrared thermometers,** among others
- Turned over a **container van-type isolation room** to the Biñan Doctors Hospital, and testing booths and rapid test kits to the Quezon City LGU including test administration and results interpretation
- Donated **PhP5 million** to Project Ugnayan through Caritas Manila, which distributes supermarket vouchers to economically displaced families in Metro Manila
- Implemented contingency measures, including **isolation strategy** for essential personnel, work-from-home arrangement, advanced salaries and early release of bonuses, and COVID-19 testing.

Source: NGCP Report on COVID-19 Donations, June 2020

The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation

- Activated its network of members for a **coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic**. This response included cash and in-kind donations valued at PhP3.0 billion, provision of 9.2 million food packs, 6.6 million PPEs, 490,000 liters of water, and delivery of 29.1 metric tons of relief goods
- Teamed up with Caritas Manila and a group of over 50 private sector leaders and companies who raised PhP1.7 billion for **Project *Ugnayan***
- Collaborated with Zuellig Pharma, Metro Drug, and ABS-CBN to form **Project *Kaagapay***, a project dedicated to providing more PPEs, test kits, and ventilators to the health sector
- Partnered with Brown University and Project HOPE for a **Train-the-Trainors program** in pandemic management and infectious disease control and prevention for doctors and clinicians
- Responded to the call of the government to form the public-private task force known as **T3 or Test, Trace, Treat** which helped in streamlining the management of laboratory supplies; and created mega-swabbing centers in Metro Manila

Source: PDRF Report on COVID-19 Response, July 2020

To be sure, there are so many other Good Samaritans whose names might not have been included here. Our nation extends her profound and heartfelt gratitude to each and everyone of you.

The global battle against COVID-19 could take longer than we hope. It is all the more reason for us to stay united in this fight. Our solidarity, collaboration, cooperation, and compassion are our most powerful weapons for overcoming this global challenge.

The Filipino spirit of *bayanihan* is the light that shines our way brightly. It gives us good reason to keep our faith and be hopeful for our future as a people and as a nation.

UPLIFTING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE: OUR MILESTONES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS, 2016-2019

- Making Government More Responsive
- Providing for the People's Basic Needs
- Safeguarding the Dividends of Peace and Security

Photo Credit: DA

"We are workers of the government and we serve the people... Bayad kami para magsilbi ng tao. Kaya nandito kami. Trabahante kami at handa kaming tumulong at handa kaming yakapin kayong lahat."

The President on his visit to areas affected by the Taal Volcano eruption, January 14, 2020

Chapter 3

Making Government More Responsive

We, as workers in government, are called on to respond to the challenges of the times. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a humbling experience for me as it tested the country's wherewithal and profoundly affected our way of life. But the solid reforms instituted under my Administration have allowed us not only to decisively respond to the challenges brought by the pandemic but also remain on track in our goal of bringing a comfortable life for all Filipinos.

In the four years since I assumed the Presidency, we gained recognition as one of the fastest growing economies in Asia on the back of prudent fiscal management and sound economic fundamentals.

With a steady economic growth, we helped uplift the living conditions of many of our people as we managed to reduce poverty in the country last year. We also managed to raise billions of pesos for our COVID-19 response and provide emergency stimulus to the poor and most affected by the pandemic.

For our people to truly enjoy a comfortable life, economic growth had to be coupled with reforms to effect a people-centric, credible, efficient, effective, and responsive government. We have put systems in place to respond to our people's complaints about lousy government service, ensuring that it would not fall on deaf ears. We have introduced reforms that would spare our people from needless commute and long queues to receive government service. We have cut short bureaucratic processes because our clients should not be made to wait. We started a relentless fight against corruption and we continue to strive for transparency and accountability in all government transactions.

Four years into my term, I remain guided by one mantra: the Filipino deserves world-class standards of public service.

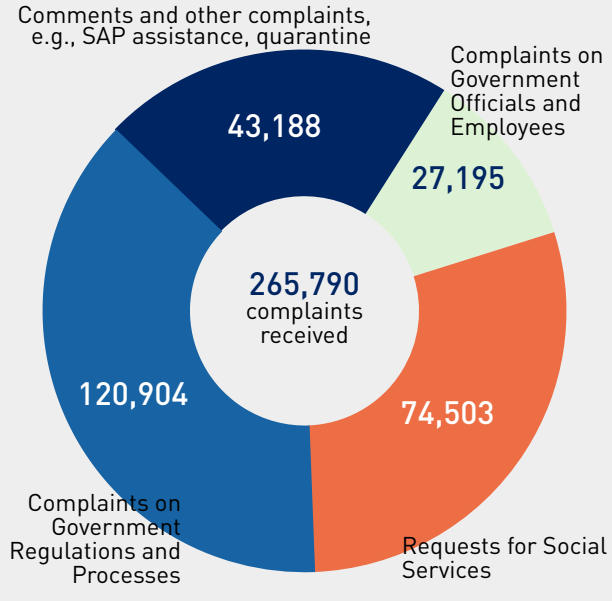
Effectively Responding to Public Concerns

Hotline 8888: Sumbungan ng Bayan[61]

Hotline 8888 continues to operate 24 hours, seven days a week. As of this year, 20 more lines have been opened in addition to the existing 40 in 2018. We are working to include the use of short message service (SMS) or text messaging as another method by which the public can report their complaints.

From November 2017 to June 2020, we have received 265,790 complaints from the public on various concerns. Of these, 177,244 have been handled by appropriate government offices; 39,412 are under processing; and 49,134 are awaiting feedback from agencies concerned *(see Figure 3.1)*.

Figure 3.1 **Complaints Received by Hotline 8888 (Nov 2017 to June 2020)**



Source: OES

61 OES, July 17, 2020.

Contact Center ng Bayan (CCB)[62]

The Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC) are working together to ensure that mounting public complaints on unsatisfactory government services are properly and expeditiously addressed and resolved, including initiating investigation and filing of cases against violators. Our people are afforded various channels for them to easily relay their feedback on the quality of government services they receive. The CCB could be reached through Hotline 16565, its website (*www.contactcenterngbayan.gov.ph*), email (*email@contactcenterngbayan.gov.ph*), and SMS (0908-8816565).

From 2016 to June 2020, the CCB received and acted upon 555,515 complaints and queries from the public, 99,640[63] of which were received from June 2019 to June 2020.

By providing the public with a platform to easily air out their concerns, we were able to closely look at sources of public dissatisfaction and address them accordingly.

Still, we will continue to focus on these agencies because bureaucratic red tape can no longer persist under my watch. Since its inception, the ARTA has closely worked with the agencies that have incurred the highest red tape-related concerns to simplify their requirements, reduce processing time, automate processes, and improve their overall service delivery.

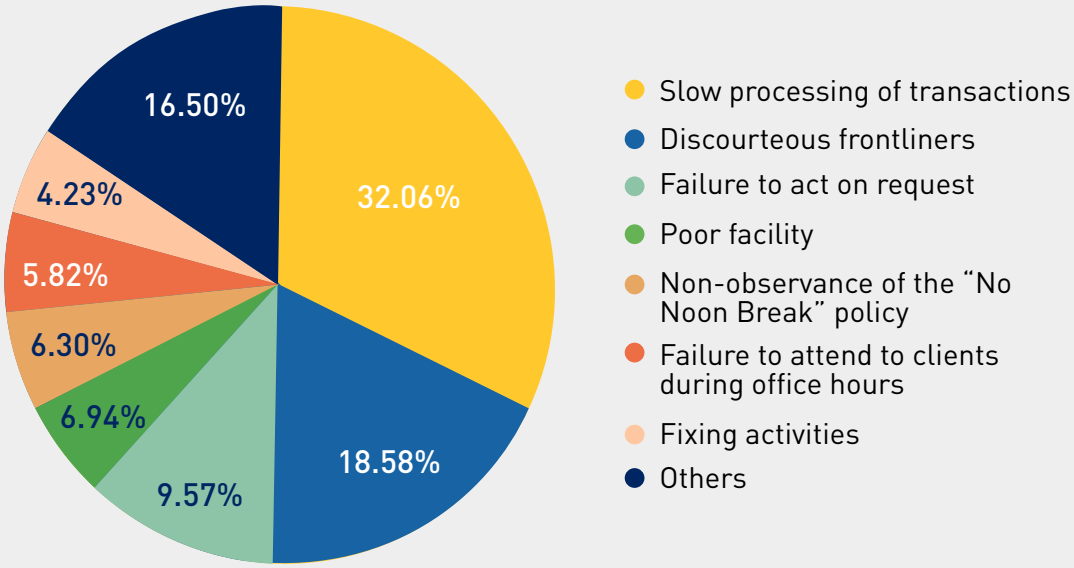
With the help of the ARTA, these agencies have taken steps to improve their processes. However, given that these agencies still received numerous complaints from the people, much more still needs to be done to make their processes truly client-friendly.

On February 21, 2020, I issued Administrative Order (AO) no. 23 to address the people's concern on excessive and ineffective regulations in government processes. Pursuant to this Order, the ARTA launched the National Effort on the Harmonization of Efficient Measures of Interrelated Agencies (NEHEMIA) Program. Aside from targeting to cut down costs in transacting with the government, the program aims to solve the lack of interconnection among agencies in the delivery of services to our people.[64]

I expect the ARTA not only to closely monitor, but also adopt stringent measures to ensure that all agencies are strictly complying with this Order. Improvements in this regard are geared towards our advancement in the areas of competitiveness and ease of doing business.

62 CSC CCB Accomplishment Report, July 9, 2020.
63 15,653 of these were received during the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine from March 16 to May 31, 2020. Mostly, complaints were about the Social Amelioration Program; reports against government personnel; repatriation of stranded Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and seafarers; and distribution of relief goods.
64 ARTA 2019-2020 Accomplishment Report, July 10, 2020.

Figure 3.2 **Nature of ARTA-related Complaints**



Source: CSC

Table 3.1 **Five Agencies with the Highest Number of ARTA-related Reports (June 2019-June 2020)**

Rank	Nature of Complaints
1 LTO	Slow Process; Fixing Activities; Discourtesy; Non-Observance of "No Noon Break" Policy; Poor Facility
2 SSS	Slow Process; Discourtesy; Failure to Attend to Clients during Office Hours; Poor Facility and Systems; Unclear Procedures; Long Lines; Not Client-friendly
3 BIR	Slow Process; Discourtesy; Poor Facility; Unclear Procedures; Non-observance of "No Noon Break" Policy
4 LRA	Slow Process; Failure to Attend to Clients during Office Hours; Non-observance of "No Noon Break" Policy; Discourtesy; Unattended Hotline Number
5 Pag-IBIG	Slow Process; Poor Facility; Unclear Procedures; Unattended Hotline Number; Discourtesy

Source: CSC

Making Government Transactions Easier

Ease of Doing Business

Our country has already attained significant milestones in making business transactions easier. Last year, we improved our ranking from 124th (out of 190 countries) in 2018 to 95th based on the latest World Bank Annual Doing Business Report. The report noted that the Philippines has improved in the areas of starting a business, dealing with construction permits, and protecting minority investors. Starting a business was made easier by abolishing the minimum capital requirement for domestic companies, while obtaining an occupancy certificate was improved due to the streamlined process in securing construction permits.[65]

For our country to maintain its competitiveness and sustain its momentum among the fastest-rising economies in Asia, we are also continuously listening to our partners in the private sector to speed up the issuance of permits and other licenses. I am pleased to share that the Electronic Business Permits and Licensing System (e-BPLS), which has allowed business owners to file new applications and renewal of business permits online since 2017, has done its part in making transactions easier in 114 LGUs. Also, the DILG reported increasing compliance of LGUs with revised BPLS standards *(see Table 3.2)*.[66]

Table 3.2 **Compliant LGUs on BPLS Revised Standards**

Revised Standards on BPLS	As of end of Dec 2017	As of end of Dec 2018	As of end of Dec 2019
New Business Permit Application			
Use of unified form	91%	96%	98%
3 steps or less	64%	85%	91%
2 signatories or less	77%	88%	91%
2 days processing time or less	79%	90%	94%
Business Permit Renewal			
Use of unified form	90%	95%	98%
3 steps or less	66%	86%	92%
2 signatories or less	78%	88%	92%
1 day processing time or less	79%	89%	94%
Automation / computerization of BPLS	25%	27%	31%

Source: DILG

65 DICT, July 17, 2020; and DTI, July 16, 2020.
66 DILG, July 15, 2020.

Even before the signing of RA no. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act in 2018, I have directed all government agencies and LGUs to simplify their processes and reduce the time an application goes through before its release. Barely a year in operation, the ARTA has accomplished the following:[67]

- Filed cases against erring officials and employees for violation of RA no. 11032;

- Conducted entrapment operations against employees of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and the Office of the Building Official of Taguig City due to alleged act of fixing in consideration of economic and other gain or advantage;

- Issued Memorandum Circular (MC) no. 2020-002, which directed the automatic approval of pending applications or requests for the issuance of license, clearance, permit, certification, or authorization beyond the prescribed processing time of 3-7-20 working days, provided that all requirements have been complied with. This issuance prompted 222 agencies to act upon 7,768,189 transactions, 7,399,298 of which were transactions with the Social Security System (SSS). The ARTA is slated to conduct a joint audit with the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) on the agencies' compliance with MC no. 2020-002; and

- Launched on February 28, 2020 the National Business One-Stop Shop (NBOSS), which is intended to facilitate the registration of businesses in the country by putting in one location and integrating the processes of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), SSS, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG. It is supported by a platform called the Central Business Portal, an online system aimed to reduce, if not eradicate long queues and human intervention in business registration-related transactions. As of February 27, 2020, the DILG reported that 92 percent or 1,389 LGUs established Business One-Stop Shop for frontline services dealing with clients.

Consular Services[68]

For our overseas workers whose time at home could be better spent with their family, we made the consular services more convenient by reducing the different requirements and implementing interventions to hasten the application process.

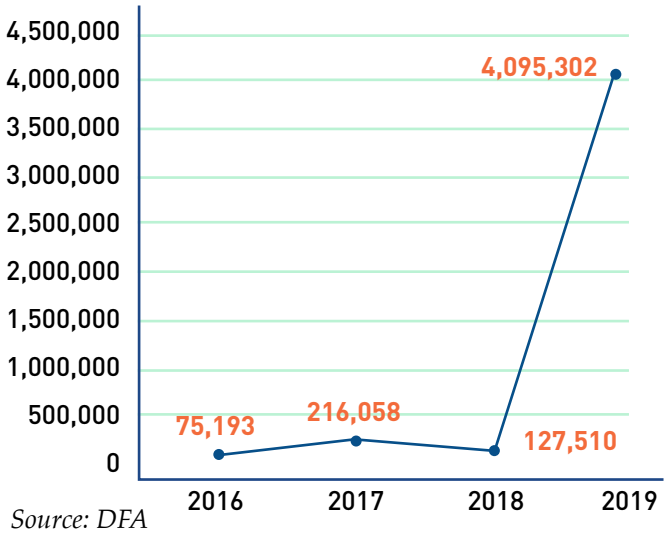
67 ARTA, Memo for the CabSec dated 10 February 2020, February 10, 2020; and ARTA, Report on Compliance with ARTA MC 2020-02
68 DFA, July 17, 2020.

To meet the increasing demand for consular services, the DFA opened mall-based Consular Offices in strategic locations nationwide and continued the Passport-On-Wheels services, which resulted in a significant increase in passports released last year *(see Figure 3.3)*. Also in 2019, the DFA issued 1,191,320 visas, which is 21.89 percent more than the number issued the previous year. In addition, 667,928 authenticated documents were issued in 2019.

Overseas Filipinos were provided with an alternative and more convenient way to renew their passports through the establishment of Overseas ePassport Renewal Centers in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on November 21, 2019 and in Abu Dhabi, UAE on June 12, 2020.

Beginning June 16, 2020, applicants who fill up their online applications via the Passport Online Appointment System may also choose to avail of the courier service for the delivery of their passports, allowing the applicants to pay for the passport processing fee and the courier fee in one transaction. The new system of paying through credit and debit cards offers faster and real-time payment without need for people to leave the safety of their homes.

Figure 3.3 **Passports Released (July 2016 -2019)**



Source: DFA

Labor Force Services[69]

To respond to the ever-changing needs of our workforce, we have instituted different programs to provide them with a reliable government support system through the following:

- *72-hour process cycle time in the delivery of frontline services,* which aims to streamline the DOLE's key frontline services such as the registration of contractors, registration of Collective Bargaining Agreement, issuance of Overseas Employment Certificate at Post, and accreditation of Occupational Safety and Health Practitioners. This is part of the overall effort to hasten the delivery of services to the public at the least possible cost while ensuring ease in transacting business and providing quality service at all times. From August 2016 to June 2020, the DOLE served 19.66 million clients under the 72-hour policy while 15.61 million or 79 percent of clients were served in less than 24 hours. In addition, transactions can be completed within six to 72 hours, an improvement from the previous five days to two weeks processing time.

69 DOLE, July 17, 2020.

- *DOLE Hotline 1349* is a 24/7 hotline that provides client feedback and response to labor and employment-related inquiries. From September 2016 to June 2020, 351,401 queries were satisfactorily addressed through Hotline 1349.

- *One-Stop Service Center for OFWs (OSSCO)* brought together all concerned government agencies in one location and made frontline services accessible to Filipinos who are currently working or planning to work overseas. It aims to reduce transportation expenses of OFWs and shorten the processing time of their documents. Accessible to OSSCO clients are 23 identified services from 16 different government agencies. From December 2016 to June 2020, 5.95 million clients have been served by the 18 OSSCOs nationwide.

Left Picture: OFWs avail of services offered by the OSSCO at the POEA Central Office in Mandaluyong City.
Right Picture: The OSSCO POEA Central Office reopens its doors to the public after the easing of quarantine measures imposed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Source and Photo Credit: DOLE

- *OFW Command Center,* which serves all OFW concerns needing immediate action and assistance, was launched in February 2018. This 24/7 central referral action hub located at the DOLE and through *www.commandcenter.dole.gov.ph* is open for all walk-in, email, text, and telephone request for assistance, and accessible through social media and online messaging platforms. From February 2018 to June 2020, 21,709 requests for assistance were resolved under the Command Center.

Transitioning to E-Governance

While health and safety became our primary considerations at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, my Administration also ensured service continuity.

Major adjustments had to be implemented in government transactions to prioritize and protect government workers' health and safety without impeding the delivery of public service.

On May 7, 2020, the CSC set multiple alternative work arrangements for government agencies through MC no. 10, series of 2020 entitled "Revised Interim Guidelines for Alternative Work Arrangements (AWA) and Support Mechanisms for Workers in the Government During the Period of State of National Emergency Due to COVID-19 Pandemic."

To ensure the safety of people reporting to government offices, agencies enforced health standard protocols and implemented precautionary measures such as disinfection and decontamination activities. Support mechanisms, such as health or psychosocial interventions, and provision of PPEs and reasonable transportation facilities and housing quarters; authorized reduced working hours; and approved monetary and other forms of incentives were also made available to government workers.

The government also encouraged the private sector to adopt similar work arrangements and health standards and guidelines. The DOLE issued various advisories to assist employers in the resumption of their operations while preserving the employment of their workers and ensuring their health and safety while working.[70]

To ensure the unhampered delivery of services to the people, we maximized online transactions to lessen the possibility of local transmission and to enable the people to transact with the government from the convenience of their homes.

Figure 3.4 **Alternative Work Arrangements**

	Work-from-Home (WFH) • output-oriented work arrangement • authorizes the worker to produce outputs and accomplishments outside of the office
	Skeleton (skeletal) Workforce • minimum number of employees required to keep an office functional
	Four-day (compressed) Workweek • workweek compressed to four (4) days each week
	Staggered Working Hours • applicable to offices/agencies that observe 24/7 shifting or flexible working time
	Other Alternative Work Arrangements • combination of the above enumerated work arrangements or other work arrangements applicable to the agency • subject to the prevailing community quarantine in the area where the agency is located

Source: CSC

National Government Portal (NGP).[71] The NGP or GOV.PH is a one-stop site where people can find reliable and up-to-date services, data, and information. Currently, 231 e-services are linked to the NGP and by the end of 2022, the DICT envisions an increase in the number of new, up, and running government services listed in the GOV.PH. We will also improve online government data and information to ensure more up-to-date and reliable information on the Philippine Government.

70 DOLE, July 17, 2020.
71 DICT, July 17, 2020.

Part of the NGP is the Central Business Portal stationed at the first NBOSS location at the SEC Office at the Philippine International Convention Center. Given the new normal situation, NBOSS will be re-engineered as a virtual NBOSS moving forward.

e-Kadiwa.[72] To support the agricultural sector, we expanded the DA's online services by launching new programs such as *e-Kadiwa*, an online marketing platform that directly links producers and agri-preneurs to consumers. Customers may visit *eKadiwa.da.gov.ph*, where they can order a wide range of fresh and affordable farm and fishery products from 24 different merchants as of July 21, 2020. The *e-Kadiwa* also partnered with Grab Express and Lalamove for logistics and delivery services.

Business Name Registration System (BNRS). Filipinos who registered their business names under the DTI's BNRS portal also significantly increased during the pandemic. In 2019, business name registration for enterprises involved in retail sale via internet was only 1,642. This has increased significantly in 2020 with 37,141 business names registered under the same classification from January to June 20, 2020.[73]

BIR Online Facility. As for the taxpayers, they were able to take advantage of the BIR's online facility during the pandemic. From January to June 30, 2020, the BIR facilitated 1.89 million electronic payment transactions amounting to PhP824 billion. Under my Administration, the BIR introduced additional electronic payment channels, which taxpayers can utilize to pay their tax returns online, on top of the electronic Filing and Payment System and GCash digital platform. These include the PesoNet through the LBP Link.biz Portal, Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) PayTax Online System, UnionBank Online, and PayMaya.[74]

LTO Online Facility. Also, on June 8, 2020, the Land Transportation Office (LTO) opened their online portal (*portal.lto.gov.ph*) where motorists may now access their records, and apply or renew their car registration and driver's licenses online. The portal aims to ease car registration and license application procedures and enable applicants to make cashless payments for fines and other fees before making an appointment at an LTO branch office.[75]

Electronic Inquest Proceeding. To continue processing complaints and other cases, on March 27, 2020, the DOJ issued an Office Order on Electronic Inquest Proceeding (E-Inquest) which can be availed by NCR City Prosecutors. The E-Inquest allows the virtual conduct of inquest using any online platform that may be managed by the participating Prosecutor's Offices.[76]

72 eKadiwa Official Website, https://www.ekadiwa.da.gov.ph/ accessed on July 21, 2020.
73 DTI, July 16, 2020.
74 DOF, July 22, 2020.
75 DOTr July 16, 2020.
76 Baker Mckenzie, Philippines: Modified Procedures for Inquest, Posting of Bail, and Filing of Criminal Cases in Court, April 2, 2020.

Intensifying the Fight against Corruption

In our unrelenting crusade to cleanse the government of bad eggs, I have fired and caused the resignation of more than a hundred high-ranking officials, without exemption, including allies and campaign supporters. Those who continue to engage in practices that do not benefit the Filipino people can also expect to get the axe in the future.

Despite our best efforts, several corruption controversies rocked the country starting last year, such as the issue on the expanded Good Conduct Time Allowance (GCTA) law and the discovery of the *pastillas* bribery scheme, among others.

An exposé revealed that the GCTA was allegedly being sold inside prisons, enabling convicts of heinous crimes, including murderers, to be set free for supposed good behavior. This had greatly upset me and affected the trust of our people in their government. This led the DOJ and DILG to immediately revisit and revise the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA no. 10592 or the GCTA Law so heinous crime convicts[77] would no longer be qualified to avail of the GCTA.[78]

In the case of the *pastillas* bribery scheme, it involved certain Bureau of Immigration (BI) personnel who had allegedly been offering escort service to Chinese nationals entering the country in exchange for a PhP10,000 fee rolled in bond papers, similar to the traditional candy locally known in the country as *pastillas*. Even before such anomalies were uncovered earlier this year, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) had been investigating reported corrupt practices allegedly perpetrated by unscrupulous groups in airport terminals.

Photo Credit: PCOO

"It's a simple case of --- you resign or I file charges. And that goes for all of us. We are workers of government and we serve the people, period."

The DOJ and BI have undertaken measures to put a stop to these corrupt practices. Some of these measures include the reassignment of BI personnel, non-extension of tourist visas upon arrival, which was prone to abuse, and implementation of the Advanced Passenger Information System. We are also counting on the support of Congress to push for the passage of the BI Modernization Bill to modernize the Bureau and help discourage corruption.

77 Those charged with heinous crimes and detained before 2013 can avail of the much lesser GCTA allowance under the Revised Penal Code.
78 DILG, DOJ issue revised GCTA rules and regulations, September 17, 2019.

DOJ Secretary Menardo I. Guevarra and DILG Secretary Año jointly sign and issue the revised IRR of the GCTA Law on September 15, 2019.
Photo Credit: DOJ

Likewise, to ensure transparency and remove opportunities for corruption in ports of entry, I also directed the DOTr to replace the walls of government frontline offices with glass and install CCTV cameras and microphones in the immigration booths to make public all transactions between immigration officers and passengers.

These setbacks served as inspiration for us to be even more determined to provide the Filipino people a credible government that they truly deserve. A staunch partner in this massive undertaking since its creation in October 2017 has been the PACC. The PACC has helped in rooting out corrupt officials in government and filing appropriate cases against these unscrupulous individuals. There are currently 55 corruption-related concerns endorsed by the PACC to the Office of the Ombudsman. It has also completed 78 fact-finding investigations and is currently conducting 92 more. [79]

Together with the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), the PACC initiated the conduct of lifestyle checks on government employees. Several of my Cabinet members voluntarily submitted themselves to undergo the process and directed all their respective department officials to participate. At present, the PACC is working hard to complete its ongoing 15 lifestyle checks as quickly as possible.[80]

Last year, we initiated *Bantay Korapsyon* to bring our campaign against corruption to the local level by encouraging the active participation of various stakeholders. The DILG conducted a series of town hall meetings dubbed as *Kape-Kapehan para sa Bayan* in several LGUs to stress the crucial role of the public, including civil society organizations, in eliminating corruption at the grassroots level. Through *Bantay Korapsyon*, the DILG acted on 866 complaints against local officials in 2019, majority of which were related to the 2019 Mid-term National and Local Elections.[81]

There shall be no letup in our fight against corruption. I am counting on the PACC to intensify its crackdown on corrupt officials in the government.

79 PACC, June 20, 2020.
80 Ibid.
81 DILG, July 15, 2020.

Promoting Budget Transparency[82]

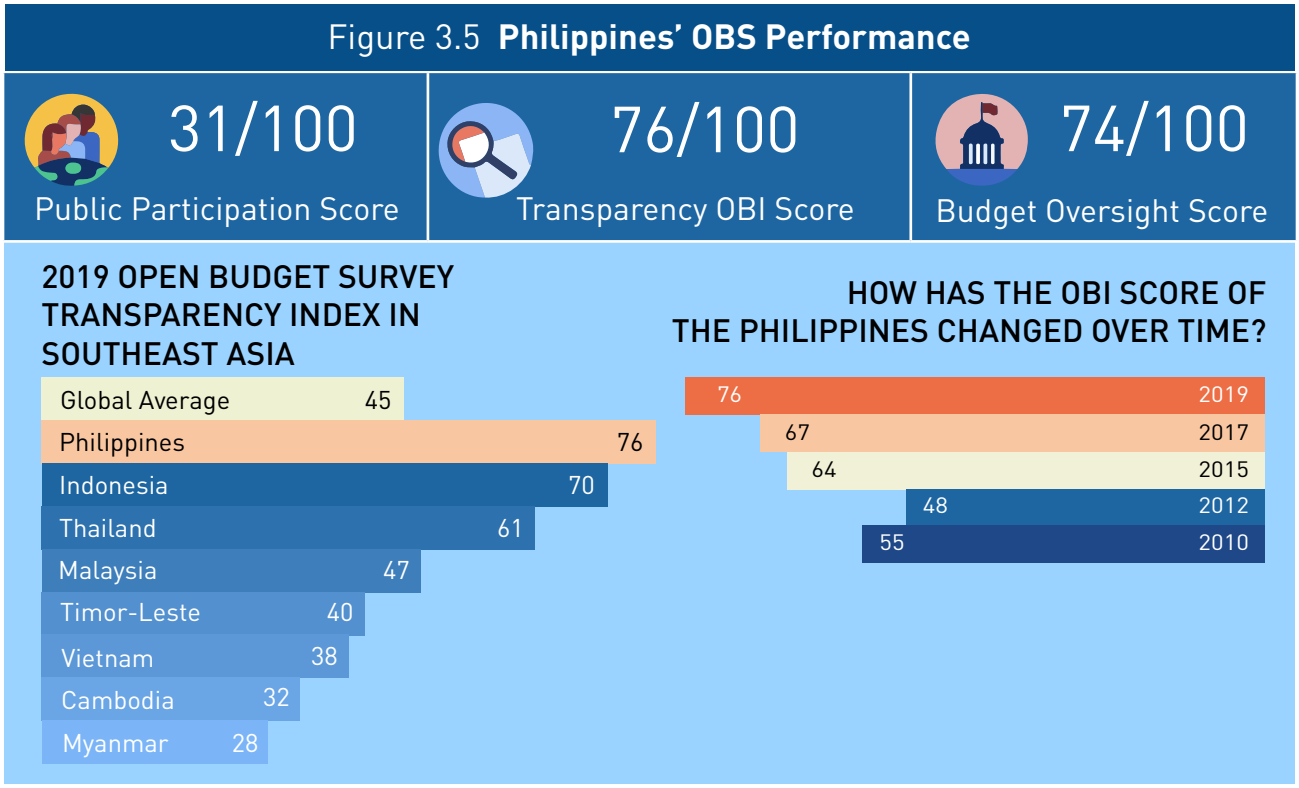
In our effort to make the government more open, accountable, and responsive, we promoted budget transparency. We substantially disclosed information on the country's budget as we want our citizens to participate, monitor, and scrutinize how we raise revenues, allocate resources, and manage our public finances. I am truly delighted that we succeeded in this endeavor.

According to the Open Budget Survey (OBS) of the International Budget Partnership,[83] the Philippines remains the most fiscally transparent country in Southeast Asia in 2019. In terms of global ranking, the Philippines ranked 10th worldwide (out of 117 countries) for the first time in 2019, a substantial jump from the 19th spot in the previous OBS.

The country's 2019 Open Budget Index (OBI) score climbed nine notches higher to 76 (out of 100) from 67 in 2017, exceeding the 2019 and 2021 OBI target scores of 67 and 71, respectively, under the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022. Our score is also notably higher than the global average score of 45.

The country's participation score[84] is also the sixth highest score worldwide (31 out of 100) and is significantly above the global average score of 14. Moreover, budget oversight remained strong in our country, with a composite oversight score of 74 (out of 100), which means that

Figure 3.5 **Philippines' OBS Performance**



Source: DBM

82 DBM, July 17, 2020.
83 A biennial survey developed by the International Budget Partnership that uses independent, comparative, and internationally-accepted criteria to assess budget transparency, public participation, and budget oversight.
84 A transparency score of 61 and above implies comprehensive, timely, and online publication of all key budget documents such as the Enacted Budget and Citizen's Budget, among others.

Congress and the Commission on Audit are adequately overseeing the budget process.

In September 2019, I issued EO no. 91 on the adoption of the Cash Budgeting System (CBS) beginning Fiscal Year (FY) 2019. Unlike the previous obligation-based budgeting system where the implementation period for projects is open, the CBS promotes discipline, focus, and better operational planning among agencies as it funds only the programs and projects that can be implemented and completed within the fiscal year. It also provides for a fixed implementation and payment period that must be strictly observed.

This year, as we transition to the CBS, all appropriations authorized under our PhP4.1-trillion 2020 national budget shall be available for release until December 31, 2020. Implementation and payment may be done until June 30, 2021 for maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) and non-infrastructure capital outlays, and until December 31, 2021 for infrastructure items. With the help of Congress, we have allowed the same timetables for the PhP3.7-trillion 2019 budget as their utilization was delayed by almost four months due to late budget approval.[85]

I am confident that the adoption of the CBS will ensure the prudent use of our public resources, prevent wastage and corruption, and ultimately, improve the quality and efficiency of our public services.

The DBM also instituted other reforms to complement the CBS.

- *Budget and Treasury Management System (BTMS)* is an integrated and secure information system for the public financial management operations of the government. It has been introduced to 108 national government agencies and has been rolled out to 12 agencies.[86] It allows oversight agencies to generate reports on government transactions at near

DBM Secretary Wendel E. Avisado, seated with Speaker Alan Peter S. Cayetano (seated rightmost), House Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez (second from left), and Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr. (seated leftmost), presents to the House of Representatives the FY 2020 budget proposal.
Photo Credit: DBM

85 RA no. 11464, December 20, 2019.
86 DBM; DPWH; DTI; DSWD; DICT; DENR; DND; Bureau of the Treasury; Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration; National Commission on Indigenous Peoples; Environmental Management Bureau; and Benguet State University.

real-time. This year, the DBM targets to roll out the BTMS to more than 23 agencies. The interface between the BTMS and the Modernized Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (MPhilGEPS) is also targeted to be completed in 2020, fortifying the link between planning, procurement, and budget utilization.

- *MPhilGEPS* is a single, central electronic portal that aims to achieve transparency in all stages of government procurement. From February 2019 to July 10, 2020, the Virtual Store, which was the first phase of MPhilGEPS that allows online procurement of common-use supplies and equipment on a 24/7 basis, has facilitated 2,604 transactions amounting to PhP312.91 million. The remaining phases of the MPhilGEPS are targeted to be completed by December 2020.

Sustaining Reforms in Revenue-Generating Agencies

Entrenched corruption in our revenue-generating agencies has always been one of the major causes of our people's distrust in government. I understand your frustration. Thus, since I assumed office, we have instituted reforms within these agencies to ensure that the people's hard-earned money would no longer be pocketed or squandered by corrupt officials and employees. While we still have a long way to go, I am pleased that we have started to reap the benefits from these reforms.

Intensified Anti-Smuggling Operations and Improved Collection Performance[87]

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has continuously modernized and automated its processes to deter human intervention in customs administration *(see Figure 3.6)*.

Similarly, the BOC has intensified its operations and prosecution of smugglers in the country through the BOC's Action

Figure 3.6 **Reforms in the BOC**

Source: BOC

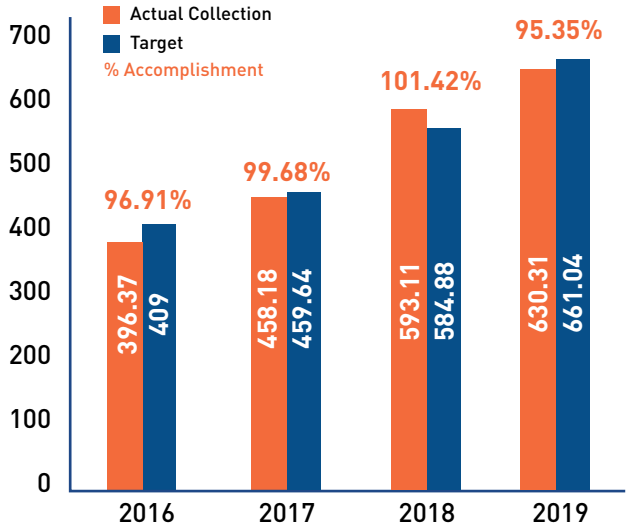
87 DOF, July 14, 2020.

Table 3.3 **BATAS Accomplishments (2017 - June 2020)**

Year	Cases Filed	Total Dutiable Value (in Billion PhP)
2017	12	6.51
2018	69	2.99
2019	27	3.60
Jan -June 2020	19	0.39
TOTAL	127	13.49

Source: BOC

Figure 3.7 **Collection Performance of the BOC, 2016-2019 (in Billion PhP)**



Source: DOF

Team Against Smugglers (BATAS). From 2017 to June 2020, the BOC has filed 127 cases against importers, brokers, and Customs employees before the DOJ, with a dutiable value of PhP13.49 billion *(see Table 3.3)*. Aside from these, the BOC has either revoked or suspended the Customs accreditation of 852 importers and 208 customs brokers since 2016.

The discipline and proper administration that we have been instilling in the BOC are paying off as the Bureau collected PhP630.6 billion in import duties and other taxes in 2019, up by 6.3 percent compared to PhP593.11 billion in 2018 *(see Figure 3.7)*.

The BOC also filed with the Office of the Ombudsman 158 cases against its erring employees, 13 of whom were subsequently dismissed from the service while two were suspended for various offenses. They were among those whom I directed to be charged with appropriate cases for corrupt practices in office.

The BOC raids a warehouse full of infringing goods in Tondo, Manila on July 6, 2020.
Source and Photo Credit: BOC

BOC-Port of Manila personnel seize tons of misdeclared sugar on December 17, 2019.
Source and Photo Credit: BOC

Aside from going after corrupt employees and smugglers, we also recorded a significant increase in the value of seized smuggled goods. From July 2016 to June 2020, the BOC seized an estimated PhP53.63 billion worth of smuggled goods through its intensified anti-smuggling operations.

I expect the BOC to continue weeding out corrupt officials and employees among its ranks.

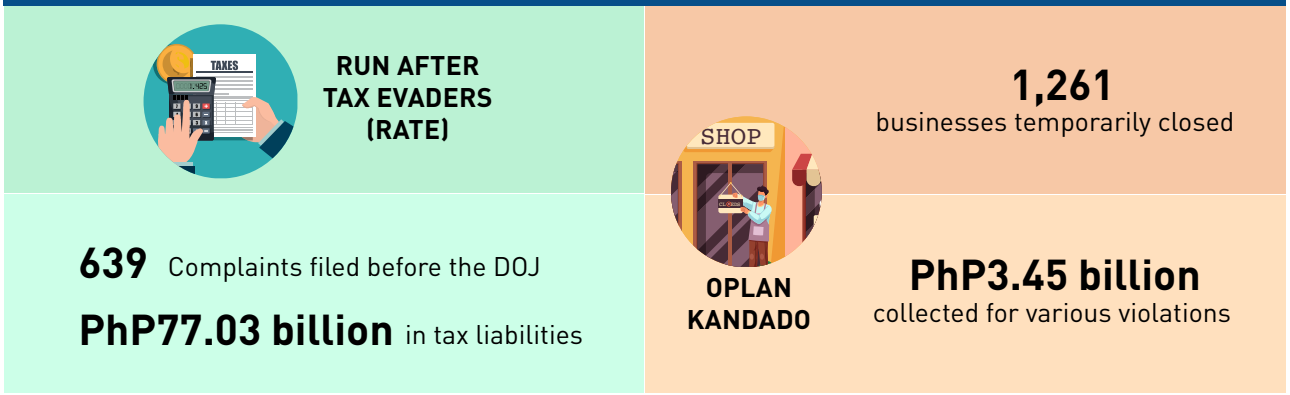
Stronger Tax Monitoring and Enforcement[88]

Taxes are the lifeblood of any government. They serve as fuel that even the most well-oiled bureaucracy cannot do without. Thus, I am pleased that the BIR's collection in 2019 breached the PhP2-trillion mark for the first time, with PhP2.19 trillion in taxes collected. This represents an increase of 11.73 percent from PhP1.96 trillion in 2018.

To sustain the strong revenue collection, the BIR strengthened its tax monitoring and enforcement efforts. From July 2016 to June 2020, the BIR has filed 639 complaints against tax evaders before the DOJ, with 62 more cases up for filing. These complaints involved tax liabilities worth an estimated PhP77 billion.

From July 2016 to June 2020, the BIR ordered under its *Oplan Kandado* program the temporary closure of 1,261 business establishments nationwide and collected PhP3.45 billion due to various violations of the National Internal Revenue Code by these establishments.[89] Meanwhile, as a result of the general amnesty on unpaid internal revenue

Figure 3.8 **Tax Monitoring and Enforcement Accomplishments (July 2016 - June 2020)**



Source: DOF

88 DOF, July 14, 2020 and July 22, 2020.
89 DOF, July 22, 2020.

taxes that we instituted last year through RA no. 11213 or the Tax Amnesty Act, we have collected an additional PhP4.26 billion on unfiled and unpaid taxes from delinquencies and estate taxes as of May 2020.

Due to our sustained campaign to crack down on errant Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs) and their service providers that have eschewed tax payments, we collected PhP6.42 billion in taxes in 2019, which was 170 percent more than the PhP2.38 billion collected from these businesses in 2018. In July 2019, concerned agencies signed Joint MC no. 001, s. 2019, which set the rules and regulations on the reunified government policy for allowing foreign workers to engage in gainful employment in the country. Under the said circular, foreign nationals are required to secure a Taxpayer Identification Number from the BIR to ensure payment of appropriate taxes.[90]

The BIR also enhanced its complaint system to better serve its primary stakeholders: the taxpayers. The BIR made its complaint system electronic for faster response to the taxpayers' complaints and concerns. With the eComplaint System, taxpayers can report complaints on the non-issuance of official receipts or invoices through the eComplaint NO-OR online facility; complaints and concerns relative to erring BIR personnel through eComplaint DISIPLINA; and complaints related to tax evasion through eComplaint Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) without leaving the comfort of their homes.[91]

Moving forward, I am confident that the BIR can surpass its previous accomplishments. I enjoin the BIR to continue improving its collection performance and the responsiveness of its services to make these truly client-friendly and e-governance ready.

Maintaining Good Governance in the Public Corporate Sector[92]

Among my priorities when I assumed the Presidency in 2016 was to instill fiscal discipline, accountability, and transparency in our Government-Owned and -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs). We first revisited the compensation and incentives received by their appointive directors, through the issuance of EO no. 36 on July 28, 2017. We also closely monitored their dividend remittance as this was important in holding down fiscal deficits and ensuring funding for infrastructure and social programs, among others.

Through these efforts, we have been collecting dividends from GOCCs in record amounts. In 2018, we breached the PhP40-billion mark for the first time as we collected dividends amounting

90 DOF, July 21, 2020.
91 BIR Official Website, Enhanced BIR's eComplaint System, June 22, 2020.
92 DOF, July 21, 2020.

to PhP51.24 billion. I am pleased that we surpassed this amount in 2019, with PhP69.20 billion in dividends. This is true even after we granted dividend relief of PhP11.82 billion to the LBP, Php3.76 billion to the DBP, and PhP1 billion to the Home Guranty Corporation. The amounts correspond to their 2018 net income. This would help these GOCCS recapitalize and better serve the increasing development needs of the country.

The fiscal discipline that we have instilled has prepared our GOCCs to immediately rise to the challenge of the times. The dividends of various GOCCs have helped augment the resources we needed to fund our COVID-19 emergency response, including provision of economic relief to poor families and other vulnerable groups most affected by the pandemic. As of July 17, 2020, various GOCCs have remitted PhP127.50 billion in dividends, which is the highest amount ever collected in such a short period of time and since RA no. 7656 or the Dividend Law was enacted.

President Duterte, assisted by DOF Secretary Dominguez, awards DOTr Secretary Arthur P. Tugade with a certificate of acknowledgment for the top dividend contributions of the DOTr's attached agencies during the GOCC Day on July 11, 2019 at Malacañan Palace.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Building Trust through Access to Public Information[93]

On July 23, 2016, I signed EO no. 2, which implemented the Freedom of Information (FOI) in the Executive Branch. Increasing citizen access to public information would go a long way in restoring the people's trust in government. It is also a concrete response to the calls for improved transparency.

Four years since the signing of this landmark issuance, we continue to make a wide range of information on government efforts and processes publicly available. As the lead agency for the implementation of EO no. 2, the PCOO remains committed to promote the four values of the Philippine Open Government Partnership initiatives cited in the PDP 2017-2022: 1) access to information, 2) civic participation, 3) public accountability, and 4) technology and innovation for openness and accountability.

93 PCOO, July 15, 2020.

Figure 3.9 **FOI Accomplishments**

Source: PCOO

FOI Manuals defining agencies' process to facilitate FOI requests have been published in print format to guide those without internet access, and in digital format to allow the public to request information without physically going to government offices. As of July 15, 2020, all 190 National Government Agencies have complied with the directive to submit their FOI Manuals, while compliance of GOCCs is at 92 percent (102 out of 111), State Universities and Colleges at 96 percent (107 out of 111), and Local Water Districts at 46 percent (240 out of 520).

Since its implementation in November 2016, 31,827 requests received through the eFOI portal *(www.foi.gov.ph)* have been resolved. The top agencies with the highest number of eFOI portal requests include the PSA, DOH, and DepEd *(see Table 3.4)*.

To provide our people with wider access to government information, the PCOO has continuously reached out to other government entities outside the Executive Branch. The Supreme Court and other Constitutional Commissions have participated and submitted their own FOI Manuals. In the remaining years of my Administration, we will continue working with Congress on the passage of the FOI bill to ensure that our people's Constitutional right to information is fully realized.

Table 3.4 **Agencies with the Highest Number of eFOI Requests**

1	Philippine Statistics Authority	3,181
2	Department of Health	2,080
3	Department of Education	1,348
4	Department of Social Welfare and Development	1,253
5	Department of Labor and Employment	1,196

Source: PCOO

A Student's Feedback on the eFOI

"The information I acquired from the eFOI portal helped supplement my position paper, as a member of the Heritage Conservation Society, in advocating the preservation and conservation of our built heritage. It helped me in my endeavor and it also assured other advocates that government's transparency shows commitment to the preservation, conservation, and development of our built heritage."

Edward Bryan Caisip
Bachelor of Library and Information Science
University of the Philippines Diliman

Source: PCOO

Way Forward: Towards Greater Transparency and Responsiveness of Services to the Public

My Administration has worked doubly hard in addressing public concerns, streamlining government processes, ensuring prudent use of the people's money, and making important services and public information more accessible. Systemic corruption has long denied resources and services that the people deserve. I have vowed to rectify this injustice by placing the Filipino at the heart of every government effort to bring us closer to the people and restore the people's faith and trust in government.

The road ahead is still long but we are not changing course. With the help of Congress, the bills on FOI and BI Modernization shall become laws that will help drive greater transparency and responsiveness in public service delivery. Now more than ever, as we continue to face the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, your government must accelerate the digitization of services, further improve systems to be more client-friendly, and push for greater horizontal integration among agencies.

Four years into my term, I remain faithful to my commitment to ensure that every single centavo spent will redound to the well-being of the Filipino people, beginning with easy and immediate access to their most basic needs. A comfortable life for all Filipinos has always been my overarching goal.

"As a worker of government, I promised to do whatever it would take to give all Filipinos a comfortable life, fighting powerful interests and making sacrifices. My obligation is to promote and uphold the greatest good, for the greatest number."

The President's State of the Nation Address (SONA), July 23, 2018

Photo Credit: DA

Chapter
4

Providing for the People's Basic Needs

The Filipino people's well-being is always foremost in my mind. True to this commitment, we pursued transformational reforms toward responsive services that would provide for better, safer, and healthier lives for our people. As such, the share of social services has accounted for over a third of our national budget for the past three years.

We have institutionalized programs and projects to make available sufficient and affordable food; ensure the supply of clean and potable water; provide decent and affordable housing; energize households nationwide; make quality education and training inclusive; deliver professional and accessible health

care; and advance employment and livelihood opportunities for our people, especially the poor and marginalized. With this, we hope to not only give them the service that they deserve but also prepare and enable them to be resilient against the challenges that may come along the way.

Achieving Food Security through Sustainable Agriculture

Sustained Agricultural Development

We remain focused on ensuring that food is available and within reach of every Filipino family. As a result, the country continued to rise in rank in terms of food security under the Global Food Security Index (GFSI),[94] from being ranked 79th in 2017 to 64th in 2019 *(see Table 4.1)*.

Table 4.1 **Philippine Ranking in the GFSI**

	Score*	Rank**	Rank Change
2016	49.5	74	-2
2017	47.3	79	-5
2018	51.5	70	+9
2019	61.0	64	+6

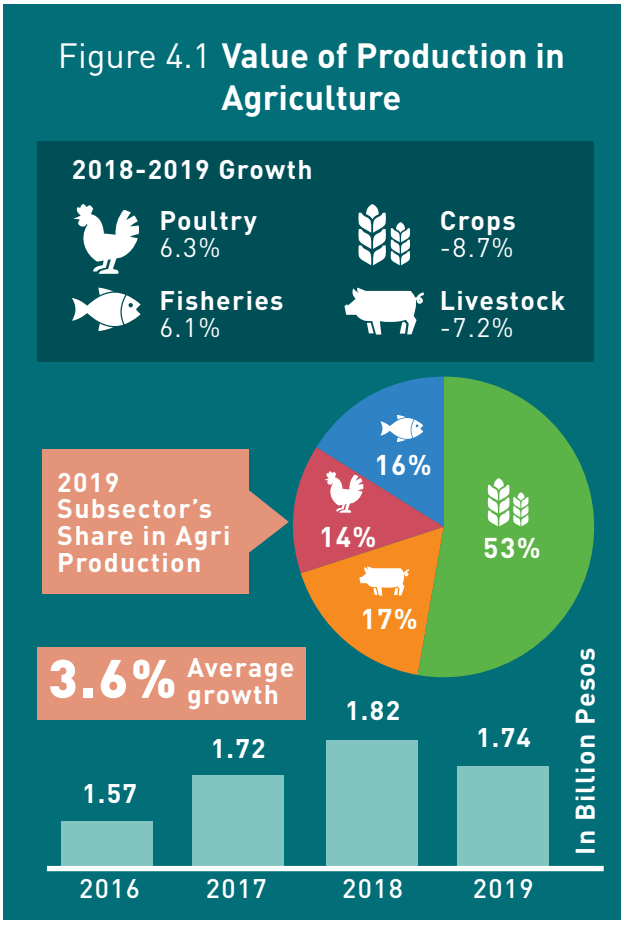
*0-100 where 100 is the most favorable
**Out of 113 countries

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)

Agricultural Production in 2019

The El Niño phenomenon, the African Swine Fever (ASF), the onslaught of typhoons in 2019, and the diminishing area of farmlands due to conversion and competing land use, led to significant challenges in the agricultural sector, which translated to a 4.4 percent decline in the value of agricultural production from PhP1.82 billion in 2018 to PhP1.74 billion in 2019. Despite the decline, we managed to sustain a 3.6 percent average annual growth in the agricultural sector from 2016 to 2019 *(see Figure 4.1)*.

Figure 4.1 **Value of Production in Agriculture**



Source: PSA

94 The GFSI is a holistic measure of a country's food system, taking into account not only its ability to supply enough calories to the population, but also how the food system is affected by factors ranging from political stability to climate threats. The 2019 index provides new data and insights for critical metrics, including agriculture infrastructure and nutritional standards, and the ability of households and countries to anticipate, absorb, and recover from a variety of shocks. (Source: EIU)

Balancing the Supply and Demand for Rice

From 2016 to 2019, our average annual local rice production was 12.23 million metric tons (MMT) or equivalent to 18.70 MMT of *palay*. However, this was inadequate to meet the national demand *(see Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2)*.

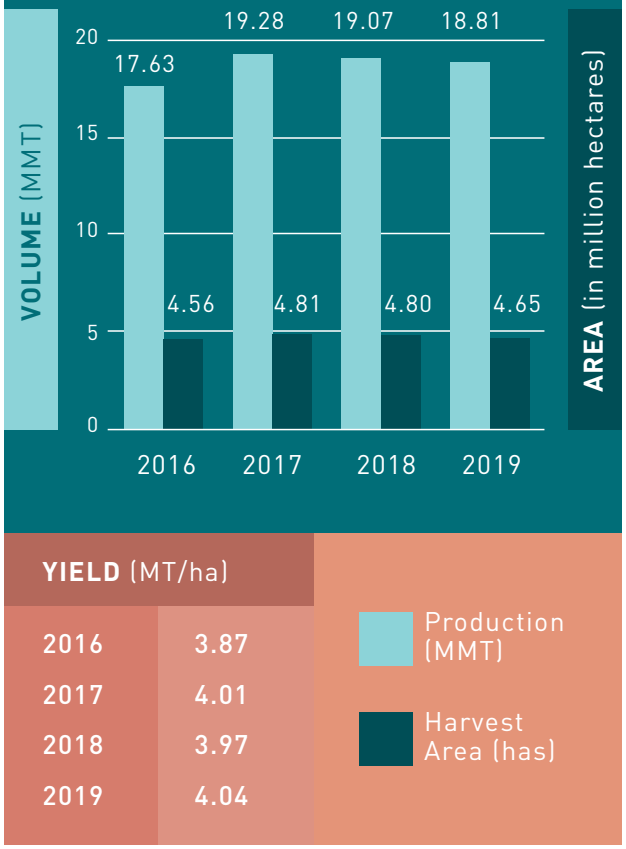
Table 4.2 **Rice Supply Situation (MMT)**

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Utilization	15.33	16.26	16.76	17.99*
Rice Production	11.53	12.61	12.47	12.31
Deficit	3.80	3.65	4.29	5.68*

*Projected utilization is based on the Philippine Statistics Authority's 2017 level of derived per capita consumption (118.16 kg/annum) and computed using a 1.72 percent population growth rate.
Sources: DA, PSA

To address the rice deficit, we are working doubly hard to help our farmers increase productivity per hectare, harvestable area, and cropping intensity, while reducing postharvest losses and crop damage due to climate change and natural disasters. We are also harmonizing the arrival of rice sourced from other countries during lean months through the diligent implementation of RA no. 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law, while at the same time providing immediate unconditional cash transfer and access to socialized agricultural and calamity-related credit facilities and crop insurance.

Figure 4.2 **Philippine *Palay* Production**



Source: PSA

Implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law

The enactment of the law in February 2019 lifted quantitative restrictions on rice imports and replaced them with tariffs. This was with the end in view of lowering rice prices and helping manage inflation.[95] The resulting drop in the retail prices of rice has benefitted millions of Filipinos, especially poor households that spend around 20 percent of their budget on rice. Meanwhile, to mitigate its impact on small local farmers, the law also provided safety nets through

95 The Rice Tariffication Law contributed to the easing of inflation rate from 6.7 percent in October 2018 to 2.5 percent in December 2019. (Source: PSA)

the annual appropriation of PhP10 billion for the next six years under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) or Rice Fund *(see Table 4.3)*.

Table 4.3 **RCEF Implementation Status**

Fund Component/ Purpose	Agency/GFI	Status (as of May 31, 2020)
PhP5 billion for equipment and machineries, and PhP100 million for training services	DA-Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PhilMech)	• Distributed **2,938** units of agricultural machinery and equipment to **625** farmer-cooperatives and associations in **57** priority provinces • Provided training on rice machinery operation, drying and milling plant servicing, and small engine servicing courses
PhP3 billion for certified in-bred seeds distribution, and PhP100 million for extension services	DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice)	Delivered **3,588,937** bags (20 kgs per bag) of seeds worth PhP2.73 billion to **950** municipalities (as of June 21, 2020)
PhP800 million for skills diversification, training, and development, including training on farm equipment operations	DA-Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)	Disbursed PhP74 million for the training of **32,319** farmers, specialists, trainers, and extension workers in 279 training courses covering farmers' field school and other technical skills development courses
PhP1 billion for Expanded Rice Credit Assistance (ERCA) loans with 2 percent interest rate per annum, payable in three years	DA-Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC), through: • LBP • DBP	Released PhP947.79 million in loans to **23** borrowing organizations and **3,109** individual borrowers nationwide

Source: DA

Brand New Farm Equipment Given to Farmers in Nueva Ecija. The DA turns over 13 rice harvesters, 12 tractors, and two mechanical rice transplanters to 36 farmers' groups in Nueva Ecija on June 4, 2020, through the RCEF agricultural machinery and equipment distribution component.

Photo Credit: DA

Rice farmers from San Simon, Pampanga receive certified *palay* seeds from the DA.
Photo Credit: DA

Rice farmers receive loan assistance under the RCEF-ERCA through the LBP.
Photo Credit: DA and LBP

Helping Local Rice Farmers Sell their Produce

The Rice Tariffication Law also mandated the National Food Authority (NFA) to source its rice buffer stock solely from local farmers. Relatedly, I ordered the DA and the NFA to ramp up their local procurement of *palay* to enable our small farmers to recoup their losses due to initial market distortions caused by the sudden surge of rice importation. As such, more and more farmers are selling their *palay* to the NFA, with PhP16.57 billion worth of *palay* locally procured since the enactment of the law, including 732,572 MT of *palay* procured in 2019, which is nearly 12 times more than the 61,783 MT procured in 2018 *(see Table 4.4)*. This has allowed our farmers to enjoy higher buying price (PhP19.00/kilogram [kg]), which has given them an added income of PhP1.89 per kg over the prevailing farm gate price (PhP17.11/kg).[96] It has also enabled us to maintain sufficient rice buffer stock that is good for over two months.

The President orders the NFA on November 20, 2019 to increase the country's rice buffer stock from 15 days to 30 days by buying more *palay* from small farmers.

Photo Credit: DA and NFA

96 PSA, Average farm gate price of *palay* from January to May 2020.

Table 4.4 **NFA *Palay* Procurement in Metric Tons (MT) (as of June 2020)**						
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Philippines	**118,257**	**29,441**	**61,783**	**732,572**	**139,360**	**1,081,413**
NCR	-	-	-	39	-	**39**
Region I	1,847	902	1,206	71,820	12,745	**88,521**
Region II	12,103	1,945	2,756	101,049	8,488	**126,341**
Region III	10,819	3,414	1,768	164,467	11,333	**191,800**
Region IV	59,964	10,754	42,584	138,053	45,454	**296,809**
Region V	9,841	2,651	1,330	33,326	9,503	**56,651**
Region VI	18,307	7,976	4,686	80,564	31,333	**142,865**
Region VII	23	31	5	281	127	**468**
Region VIII	281	125	34	4,236	468	**5,143**
Region IX	633	707	1,092	26,847	4,588	**33,867**
Region X	345	325	1,161	25,389	1,651	**28,871**
Region XI	860	191	1,440	16,794	1,367	**20,652**
Region XII	2,898	362	3,248	52,309	11,398	**70,215**
Region XIII	336	57	344	13,725	660	**15,122**
BARMM	-	-	129	3,674	248	**4,051**

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding. CAR is included in Regions I and II.
Source: NFA

Cash Subsidy for Small Farmers

As additional assistance to small rice farmers to help sustain their livelihood amidst declining *palay* prices, we made available PhP3 billion to cover express cash subsidy from November 2019 to June 2020 under the Rice Farmer Financial Assistance (RFFA). This augmented the income of 597,404 small rice farmers[97] in 33 priority provinces, who each received PhP5,000 cash subsidy through the LBP and DBP.

Another PhP3 billion was made available under the DA's budget to cover Financial Subsidy for Rice Farmers (FSRF) and help 591,246 small rice farmers[98] in 26 provinces that were not previously covered by the RFFA and eight other low-income provinces. As of June 2020, the LBP has released PhP2.61 billion to 523,165 farmer beneficiaries at PhP5,000 per farmer.

97 Rice farmers tilling 0.5 to 2 hectares who are listed in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA).
98 Rice farmers tilling one hectare or less who are listed in the RSBSA.

Mitigating the Impact of Natural Disasters and Disease Outbreaks on Agricultural Productivity

Managing the ASF Outbreak. The ASF has infected hogs in 230 cities and municipalities in 25 provinces in Luzon and Mindanao. As of June 26, 2020, we have culled 299,956 animals, affecting 34,732 hog raisers, mainly from the hardest hit provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga, and Nueva Ecija. To help small hog raisers alleviate their losses, we released PhP670.25 million to 14,158 backyard hog raisers in 14 provinces at PhP5,000 for each hog culled. In addition, we are distributing over 430,000 chickens, 1,500 carabaos, 2,555 cattle, and 3,260 goats, which could provide alternative livelihood to the affected hog raisers.

DA Secretary Dar inspects the livestock assistance given to the ASF-affected hog raisers in Rodriguez, Rizal in February 2020. *Photo Credit: DA*

To control the spread of ASF, we implemented the "1-7-10"[99] kilometer-radius isolation protocol for ASF-affected barangays and set up "24-7" animal quarantine checkpoints, which helped restrict the movement and sale of infected hogs. Heightened biosecurity measures were also implemented through the installation of footbaths in major airports and seaports, and road disinfection facility for animal transport vehicles at the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX)-STAR Tollway.

Agricultural Insurance Coverage. From July 2016 to May 2020, we provided PhP259 billion in agricultural insurance protection to around 7.4 million farmers and fisherfolk, and paid PhP9.12 billion in indemnification claims to more than one million farmers and fisherfolk who were affected by natural calamities and pests or disease outbreaks. Our campaign to promote crop insurance has gained traction due to the increase in insurance coverage for farmland planted with rice (25 percent), corn (44 percent), and high value crops (11 percent) from 2018 to 2019.

Credit Programs for Distressed Farmers and Fisherfolk. We aim to empower distressed small farmers and fisherfolk by providing an array of timely and affordable credit programs under the SURE Loan Assistance Program to restore livelihood, which were affected by man-made and natural disasters *(see Table 4.5)*.

99 The 1-7-10 protocol provides that hogs will be prohibited from entering or leaving the area within a one-kilometer radius from the site of infection or ground zero, and the site shall eventually be depopulated. Within a seven-kilometer radius, hogs would be under surveillance with restricted movement, and blood testing would be done. For areas within a 10-kilometer radius from ground zero, mandatory monitoring and reporting of swine disease occurrences shall be implemented.

Table 4.5 **DA-ACPC Various SURE Programs**			
Loan Program	**Target Beneficiaries**	**Loan Terms**	**Fund Exposure/ No. of Beneficiaries (2016 to June 2020)**
SURE-Loan Assistance Program	Small farmers and fisherfolk affected by disasters in areas declared under state of calamity	• Loans up to PhP25,000 at zero interest • Payable up to three years, based on capacity to pay	PhP342.20 million to 21,730 beneficiaries
SURE-Aid Hogs	Backyard hog raisers from ASF-affected areas	• Loans up to PhP30,000 at zero interest, no collateral • Payable up to three years	PhP18.44 million to 759 beneficiaries
SURE-Taal	Farmers and fisherfolk affected by the Taal Volcano eruption	• Emergency loans up to PhP25,000 • Recovery loans up to PhP150,000 • Payable in eight years at zero interest	PhP18.65 million to 747 beneficiaries
SURE-Aid Program - Small Rice Farmers	Farmers tilling one hectare and below, who were affected by low *palay* prices	• One-time, zero interest loan of PhP15,000 • Payable up to eight years	PhP2.49 billion to 164,274 beneficiaries

Source: DA-ACPC

The President, assisted by DA Secretary Dar and Senator Christopher Lawrence Go, leads the turnover of PhP41 million worth of financial assistance to the Provincial Government of Batangas on January 14, 2020, including a PhP30 million credit facility for farmers and fisherfolk affected by the Taal Volcano eruption, through the Mt. Carmel Rural Bank.
Photo Credit: DA

Building Agricultural Infrastructure

Before I became President, I reckoned that the inadequacy of agricultural infrastructure has been the bane of agricultural productivity. We looked into different approaches to address this immediately such as the following:

DA Secretary Dar and Senator Cynthia Villar lead the turnover ceremonies for the Israeli-funded irrigation project in Barangay Wawa Ibayo, Lumban, Laguna on October 28, 2019.
Photo Credit: DA

The President, assisted by DAR Secretary John Castriciones, leads the ceremonial distribution of Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) for BARMM farmers in Cotabato City on December 23, 2019.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Farm-to-market roads (FMRs). From July 2016 to June 2020, we completed 3,678 FMR projects with an aggregate length of 2,553 kilometers amounting to PhP23.42 billion;

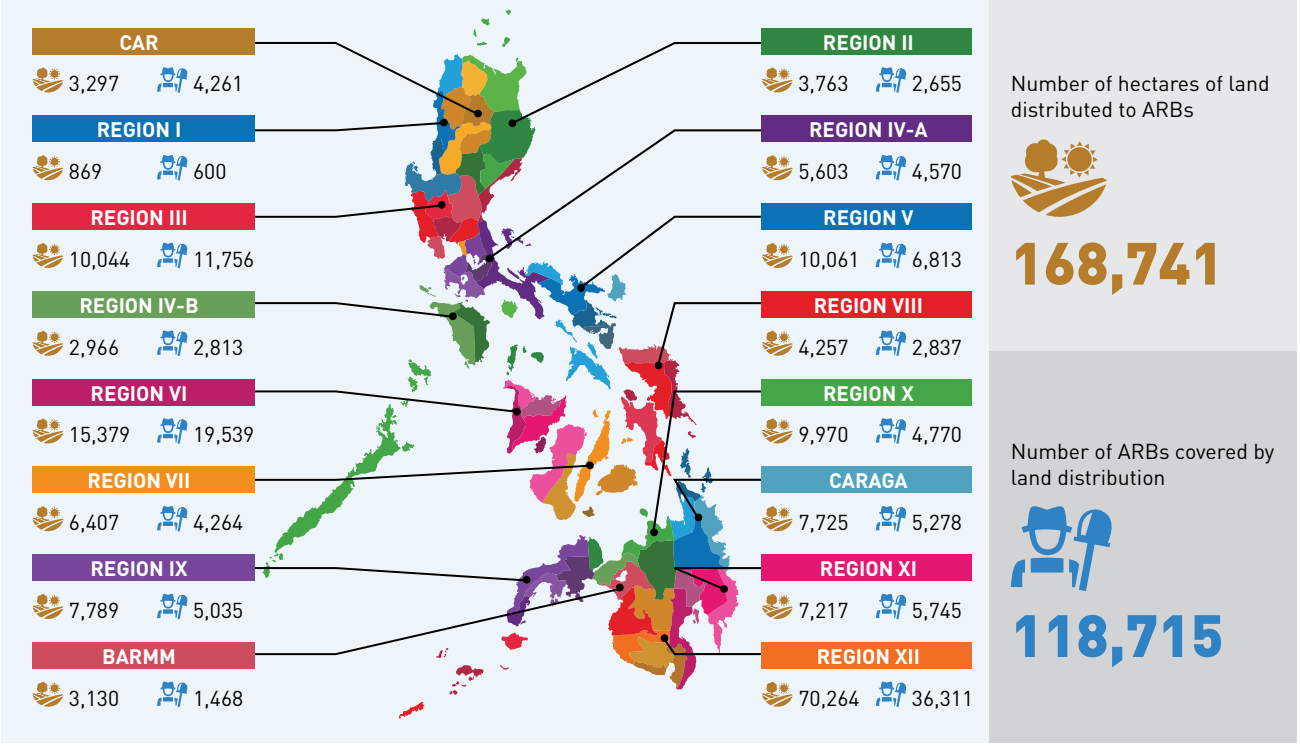
Irrigation services. From July 2016 to March 2020, we installed 46,303 small scale irrigation projects, and constructed 885 communal irrigation projects, which provided water to 44,231 hectares of farmlands, benefitting more than 7,000 farming communities; and

Production and postharvest facilities. From July 2016 to March 2020, we established and upgraded 12,540 production facilities (e.g., seed storage, stock farms, greenhouses, feed mills, rain shelters) and constructed / maintained 1,025 postharvest facilities (e.g., drying pavements, cold storage, grain silos, *palay* sheds, abattoirs, biogas digesters), which benefitted 33,536 farmers' groups.

Distributed More Lands to More Farmers under the Agrarian Reform Program

Since the beginning of this Administration, I have been very vocal about my aspiration to emancipate our poor and landless farmers from historical distortions in the allocation of land resources. In this regard, we distributed 168,741 hectares, mostly private agricultural lands, to 118,715 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) nationwide from July 2016 to May 2020. This leaves us with a balance of 519,743 hectares to be distributed by June 2022. We also trained over two million ARB family members and assisted more than 700,000 ARBs to access credit and microfinance over the same period to help maximize their productivity. In the remaining period of my term, I reiterate this commitment and convey my personal assurance that we shall give our remaining landless farmers the land that they have been tilling (*see Figure 4.3*).

Figure 4.3 **Agrarian Reform Accomplishments (July 2016 to May 2020)**



Source: DAR

Protecting the Ancestral Domain of Indigenous Peoples (IPs)

Even before I became President, it has been my advocacy to end the social injustices committed against our IPs by giving them the land due them. According to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), about 50 percent of our IPs are living below the poverty line. I am aware that social injustice is the reason why 327 IP communities remain under the influence of the unscrupulous communist terrorist group (CTG), which continues to spread its forlorn ideology. However, this situation only strengthens my resolve to recognize the rights of our IPs on ancestral domain; self-governance and empowerment; and cultural integrity.

During my term, we processed 38 applications for Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) covering 692,000 hectares, benefitting about 206,000 IPs nationwide. We also provided PhP5 million worth of merit-based scholarship to 106 IP students. In the last two years of my term, we shall prioritize the processing and approval of CADT applications in the remaining 327 IP communities influenced by the CTGs.

The President shares a light moment with IP representatives during the Joint 69th NSC and 70th NICA Founding Anniversary held at the PICC Complex, Pasay City on July 31, 2019.
Photo Credit: RTVM

Photo Credit: MWSS

Providing Clean Water, Decent Housing, and Sustainable Energy

Improved water supply and access to clean and potable water

I have always believed that access to clean, potable, and affordable water is more than a public need but a fundamental right by all Filipino families. As water is becoming harder to access, especially in far-flung areas of the country, we relentlessly pursued efforts to ensure sufficient, safe, and affordable water supply.

Hence, I was dismayed upon discovering that there were several grossly disadvantageous provisions in the current concession agreements for water services in Metro Manila and parts of Luzon, which were clearly prejudicial to the public. This was all the more disconcerting given the apparent unjustified water rate charges that had not been adequately used to effectively develop key water infrastructure and sewerage systems. Thus, it compelled us to stand firmly against the companies that had treated the provision of water services as purely business and without regard for the needs of Filipinos. We eventually prevented further unjust increase in water rates stemming from the anticipated payment of an arbitration award in favor of the water concessionaires, which would have been shouldered

Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador S. Panelo and Solicitor General Jose C. Calida conduct a briefing in December 2019, on the government's position on water concession agreements and actions taken to protect the interests of consumers.
Photo Credit: PCOO

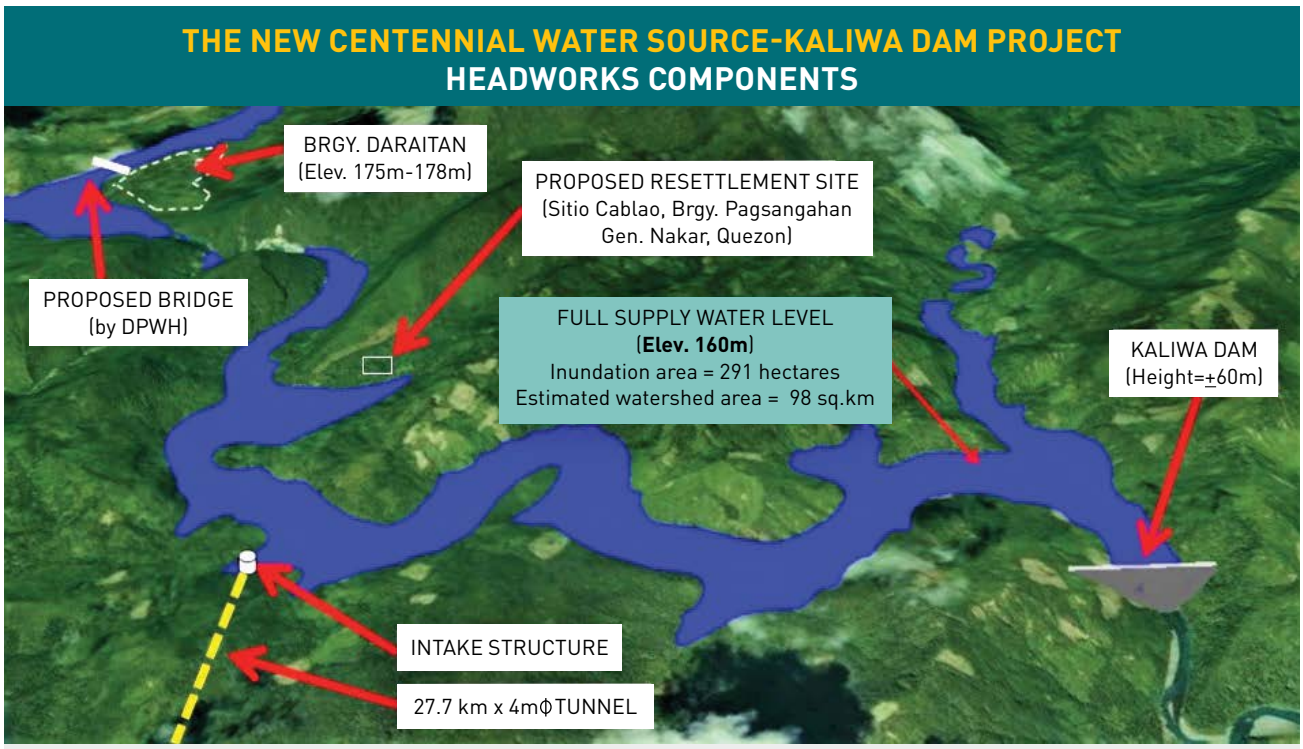
by the consuming public. We also facilitated the review and correction of the grossly disadvantageous water concession agreements, and other contracts entered into by the government. As your chief public servant, I am here not only to lead the nation but also protect Filipinos from abuse and deception. Hence, we shall rectify this great injustice.

Infrastructure Projects[100]

Meanwhile, we initiated numerous programs and projects to complement these efforts. Below are some of our accomplishments to ensure the attainment of our target of bringing 95 percent[101] of households' access to safe and affordable water supply by 2022:

BBWSP-Treatment Water Plant in San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan
Photo Credit: MWSS

Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Project (BBWSP). The BBWSP targets to address ground water supply deficiency in the province of Bulacan as a result of over-extraction, by supplying treated bulk



New Centennial Water Source – Kaliwa Dam Project Map
Photo Credit: MWSS

100 MWSS, July 2020.
101 Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022; and Draft Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan, August 2018.

water to its 23 water districts. The completed stages 1 and 2 of the project currently supplies 388 million liters per day (MLD) to 12 water districts. The remaining 11 water districts will be supplied additional water upon completion of Stage 3 of the project in 2023. This shall increase the total treated bulk water to be supplied by the BBWSP to 475 MLD. Stage 3 of the project is also expected to develop a new water source apart from Angat Dam.

New Centennial Water Source – Kaliwa Dam Project (NCWS-KDP). To meet the increasing water demand of Metro Manila, Rizal, and parts of Cavite, we are developing the NCWS-KDP as a new water source through the construction of a 60-meter high dam and 27.7-kilometer raw water conveyance tunnel.[102] It is envisioned to reduce total water dependence on Angat Dam. With a gross reservoir volume of 57 million cubic meter at full level, it is projected to provide an additional 600 MLD of water to around 670,000 households (four million individuals) by 2024. As of June 2020, the project has a 2.10 percent accomplishment rate.

AWTIP at 99.86 percent physical accomplishment
Photo Credit: MWSS

Angat Water Transmission Improvement Project (AWTIP) – Tunnel no. 4. Through the construction of Tunnel no. 4, we improved the water transmission from Ipo Dam to La Mesa Dam. This facilitated the sufficient supply of raw water to various water treatment plants and ensured stable raw water supply in cases of disaster. The project was completed in June 2020, way ahead of its target in September 2020.

Community Programs[103]

Sagana at Ligtas na Tubig para sa Lahat (SALINTUBIG) Program. We have also completed the construction of 1,406 water projects for our waterless communities as of June 2020. These benefitted 757,303 households and brought the total completed water projects to 1,816 out of the 2,664 target sub-projects.

The successful and continued implementation of the SALINTUBIG Program gradually narrowed down the water accessibility gap in the country as we assisted 44 municipalities and 39 barangays in graduating from waterless status.

Assistance to Municipalities. We have also assisted municipalities in the delivery and implementation of water services and projects through the provision of financial assistance. From July 2016 to June 2020, the LGUs completed 2,988 water sub-projects (out of 5,352 sub-projects since the program began in 2013), which benefited 1.46 million households.

102 Kaliwa Dam Project Environmental Impact Statement, July 2019.
103 DILG, July 2020.

Water Conservation Measures

In preparation for the dry season, which we projected would decrease the normal operating level of Angat Dam, and to prevent a repeat of the serious water service interruptions that affected Metro Manila and Rizal in March 2019, I issued Administrative Order no. 24[104] on March 18, 2020 directing all government agencies to strictly implement water conservation measures.

With the completion and fast implementation of programs and measures we have adopted, we are not only on our way towards attaining 100 percent universal access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030[105] but also demonstrating the success of government and private sector *bayanihan* in effecting real change in our communities.

Provided Decent and Affordable Housing

A decent and affordable home is fundamental in empowering Filipino families and building safe and secure communities. Guided by our goal to directly provide adequate and affordable housing to the country's 1.5 million households[106] by 2022, we undertook the following under the *Building Adequate, Livable, Affordable, and Inclusive Filipino Communities* or BALAI Filipino program:

Provided Housing for the Poor

Our Key Shelter Agencies provided socialized and low-cost housing to 742,480 low-income households as of June 2020 *(see Table 4.6)*.[107]

Table 4.6 **Consolidated Key Shelter Agencies Accomplishments (July 2016 to June 2020)**

KSA	Housing Units
National Housing Authority	182,250
Social Housing Finance Corporation	69,950
Pag-IBIG	337,010*
Philippine Guarantee Corporation**	153,270
Total	**742,480**

**Includes 11,963 socialized and low-cost housing units pending for take-out or claim of corresponding loans*
***EO no. 58, s. 2018, which was issued on July 23, 2018, mandated the merger of the Home Guarantee Corporation and the Philippine Export-Import Credit Agency to prevent operational redundancies between the agencies, among others.*
Source: DHSUD, Pag-IBIG

We also continue to provide shelter security for informal settler families (ISFs) through our community-driven programs as we strive to attain our target of assisting 167,613 ISFs by 2021.[108] In this regard, from July 2016 to May 2020, we were able to assist 82,203 ISFs *(see Table 4.7)*.[109]

Moving forward, we are continuously updating our plans of action, including

104 Entitled "Mandating All National Government Agencies, Government -Owned or -Controlled Corporations, and State Universities and Colleges to Strictly Implement Water Conservation Measures."
105 UNDP Sustainable Development Goal 6.
106 PDP 2017-2022, National Shelter Program direct housing assistance targets from 2017-2022.
107 DHSUD, June 2020; Pag-IBIG, July 2020.
108 Target outcome from July 2016 to December 2021.
109 SHFC, June 2020.

recovery targets, to ensure that the remaining target of assisting 85,410 ISFs will be achieved by December 2021.[110]

Table 4.7 **Accomplishments of Community-Driven Programs (July 2016 to May 2020)**

Program	No. of Projects Implemented	Loans Extended (in PhP million)	No. of ISFs Assisted
Community Mortgage Program	369	3,818.72	61,441
High Density Housing Program	31	4,358.13	16,882
Marawi City Shelter Project	3	70.86	1,450
North-South Commuter Railway Extension Project (Lot Acquisition Phase 1)	1	169.24	2,430
TOTAL	**404**	**8,416.95**	**82,203**

Source: SHFC

"Nakakatuwa po kasi na sa tulong ng Social Housing, napabilis ang pagkakaroon namin ng bahay. Nakakatuwa rin na sa murang edad po naming ito, na-achieve na namin 'yung goal na magkaroon ng sariling bahay."

ANN MARQUEZ
Member of the Policarpio Ville Homeowners Association, Inc. in San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan
Photo Credit: SHFC

"Masayang masaya po ako dahil tama 'yung desisyon namin na lumipat mula sa tinutuluyan namin dati sa ilalim ng tulay. Maraming maraming salamat po sa pamahalaan sa pagtitiwala sa aming kakayahan para umayos ang buhay ng aming pamilya."

SALVADOR ALCARAZ and Family
Among the 16 families who received transfer certificates of title for new homes in Elfa Ville Homeowners Association in San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan in August 2019.
Photo Credit: SHFC

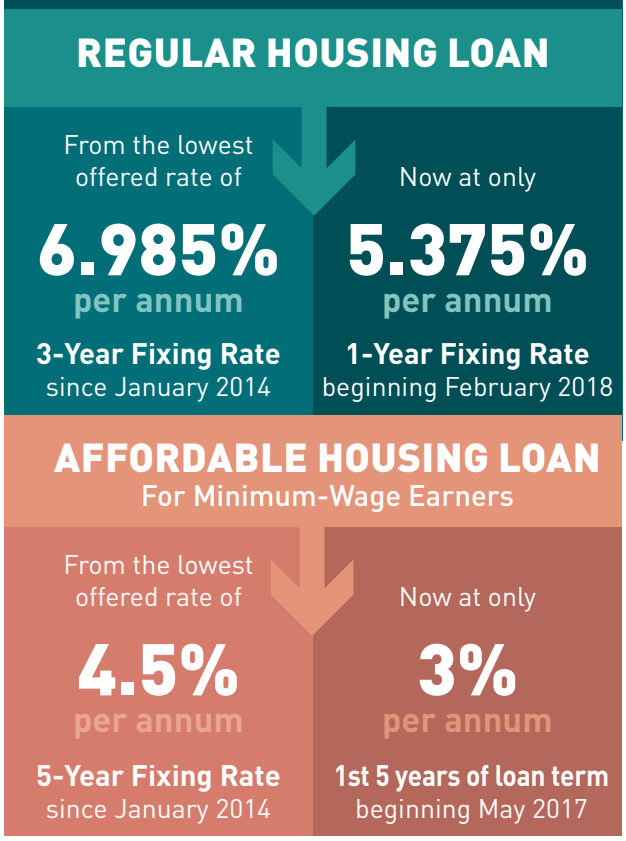
Extended Socialized Housing to Low-income Earners[111]

To provide greater opportunities for minimum-wage and low-income Pag-IBIG members to acquire or improve their homes, we continue to extend socialized housing loans under the Affordable Housing Loan Program, which offers the lowest interest rate

110 For 2020 and 2021, the SHFC targets to assist 35,000 and 60,000 ISFs, respectively. These targets are actual projects in various stages of project implementation. To facilitate the completion of these projects, modification of work processes has been adopted, such as review and evaluation of application and compliance documents through digital channels.
111 Pag-IBIG, May 2020.

at three percent *(see Figure 4.4)*. From July 2016 to June 2020, we were able to finance 97,611 socialized housing units, totaling PhP36.94 billion in loans. Aside from keeping interest rates low, we also reduced the insurance premiums to an affordable PhP2,445.30 for a socialized home loan of up to PhP580,000.

Figure 4.4 **Affordable Housing Loan Interest Rates**



Source: Pag-IBIG

Ensured Adequate and Reliable Energy[112]

We recognize the enormous demand for adequate power as we pursue our economic and infrastructure development plans. With this, and as we aim to achieve 100 percent electrification of all targeted and identified unelectrified households by 2022, we have undertaken the following:

Increased the Country's Power Generating Capacity and Energy Accessibility

We managed to increase our installed and dependable capacities to secure our power supply and prevent power outages nationwide *(see Table 4.8)*.

Table 4.8 **Philippines' Installed and Dependable Capacities (as of December 2019)**

Source	Installed* (in megawatts [MW])	Dependable** (in MW)
Coal	10,417	9,743
Renewable Energy	7,399	6,691
• Hydropower	*3,760*	*3,508*
• Geothermal	*1,928*	*1,792*
• Solar	*921*	*737*
• Wind	*427*	*427*
• Biomass	*363*	*227*
Natural Gas	3,453	3,286
Oil-based	4,262	3,015
TOTAL	**25,531**	**22,735**
Total in 2016	*21,423*	*19,097*
Increase	*4,108*	*3,638*

*Maximum amount of electricity a power plant can produce
**Load carrying ability of an electric power plant
Source: DOE

In line with our efforts to ensure that adequate power is generated in far-flung areas, we have increased the number of powerplants with 24-hour electricity service from 41 in July 2016 to 78 as of July 2020, through the National Power Corporation's Small Power Utilities Group. Meanwhile, we were able to energize 23.23 million households, as of December 2019 *(see Table 4.9)*, in line

112 DOE, July 2020.

with our primary agenda of expanding household electricity access throughout the country.

Table 4.9 **Household Electrification (as of December 2019)**

Major Island Group	Served Households	Remaining Unserved Households
Luzon	14,489,298	295,378
Visayas	4,368,043	269,280
Mindanao	4,372,525	1,053,606
TOTAL	**23,229,866**	**1,618,264**

Source: DOE

Promoted Efficient Energy Use

In April 2019, I signed into law RA no. 11285 or the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act to enhance the country's efficient use of energy and finally adopt the same as a national way of life for all Filipinos.

Improved Processing of Energy Projects

We have continuously sought to make doing business easier in the energy industry to attract more participants that could put up power plants, and transmission and distribution facilities. In this regard, I signed into law RA no. 11234 or the Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop Act to rid the energy sector of red tape and promote faster and simplified permitting process, thereby allowing competent investors to enter the market.

I also created the Energy Investment Coordinating Council, through EO no. 30, in 2017 to lead the national government in harmonizing, integrating, and streamlining processes for the development of Energy Projects of National Significance, while upholding transparency and accountability, among concerned agencies.

Facilitated the Development of Renewable Energy Resources

While we desire to attain energy security at the soonest possible time, we recognize the need to fully support the development and utilization of our renewable resources that are indigenous to the country. Indeed, the Philippines is blessed with abundant sources of renewable energy, including biomass, solar, hydro, ocean, wind, and geothermal. Thus, our country continues to have the highest renewable energy generation mix within the ASEAN region. It accounted for more than 33 percent of the Philippines' total primary energy supply in 2018.[113]

The President listens to a briefing on solar energy by Solar Philippines at its factory in Batangas on August 23, 2017. *Photo Credit: PCOO*

113 The ASEAN regional target set forth in the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation seeks to increase the renewable energy component of the ASEAN total primary energy mix to 23 percent by 2025.

In pursuit of our target to gradually reduce the nation's dependence on traditional energy sources, we encouraged our private partners to initiate the development of several renewable energy projects, including the following:

Solar Philippines Factory, which has an annual production capacity of 2.5 million panels and aims to provide greater access and affordable solar panels to Filipinos;[114]

The President, together with DOE Secretary Alfonso G. Cusi, views the map of areas powered by the Tumingad Solar Power Project in Romblon on August 21, 2019
Photo Credit: PCOO

Tumingad Solar Power Project, which is the country's first and largest hybrid solar-diesel microgrid with a battery having a 7.5 MW-peak capacity. It supports daytime power requirements of around 43,000 households in Tablas Island, Romblon through the plant's Heat Recovery Steam Generator;[115] and

Siguil Hydropower Project, which is a 15.1-MW run-of-the-river hydroelectric power plant that aims to provide additional power to 330,000 households in General Santos City and Sarangani Province by 2022 and serve part of the increasing energy demand in Mindanao. It is expected to commence operations in 2022.

The President, with Senator Go and Alson Consolidated Resources Inc. (ACR) Director Nicasio Alcantara, inspects the scale model of the Saguil Hydropower Projects in Sarangani on November 22, 2019.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Ensured Safe, Reliable, and Affordable Power in Mindanao[116]

Once beset with frequent power interruptions due to insufficient energy capacity, we have substantially improved the power situation in Mindanao since 2016. We now generate more power in the region.

We marked another milestone when we inaugurated Phase 2 of the 105-megawatt coal-fired power plant of the Sarangani Energy Corporation (SEC) in November 2019. Together with SEC Phase 1, which began operations in April 2016, these power plants have provided a combined power capacity of at least 237 MW to

114 Solar Philippines, August 2017.
115 Sunwest Water and Electric Co., Inc., August 2019.
116 DOE, PCOO, and Japan Gas Corporation, November 2019.

Sarangani Energy Corporation Coal-Fired Power Plant Phase 1 in Sarangani
Photo Credit: Alson's Power Group

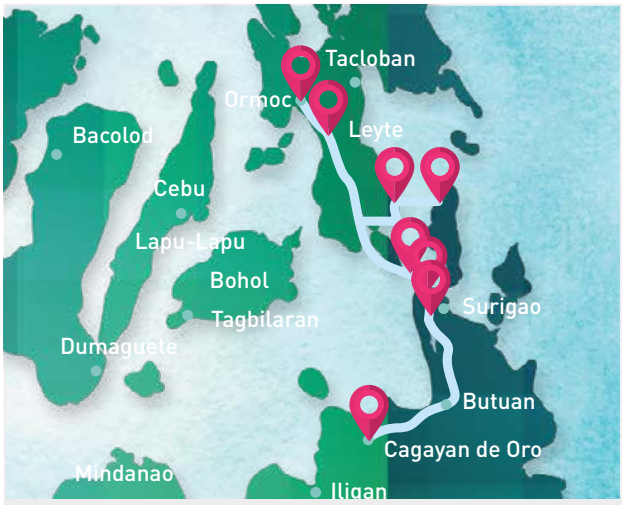
more than 2.15 million households in Sarangani Province; and Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Dapitan, Digos, Dipolog, General Santos, Iligan, Kidapawan, Koronadal, and Pagadian Cities.

The President, together with Energy Regulatory Commission Chairperson Agnes Devanadera (left) and ACR Chairperson Tomas Alcantara (right), leads the ceremonial switch-on of Phase 2 of the SEC on November 22, 2019.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Other energy projects that started operating in 2019 were the GNPower Kauswagan U1-U3 (450 MW), Asiga Hydroelectric Power Plant (8 MW), and Astronergy Development Gensan, Inc. Solar Power Plant (25 MW).[117]

Meanwhile, we commenced in June 2017 the trial operations of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market in Mindanao, which will serve as a streamlined trading platform for electricity. It is expected to commence commercial operations in December 2020.[118]

We are also fast-tracking the implementation of the Visayas-Mindanao Interconnection Project, which will enable the sharing of power capacities between the Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao Grids. This means that should there be a need for power in any island, supply could be provided by other grids. As of March 2020, the construction of the submarine cable, substation, and transmission line of the project was at 37.53 percent, 51.64 percent, and 57.02 percent completion, respectively.



Visayas-Mindanao Interconnection Project Map
Photo Credit: NGCP

117 Installed capacity.
118 DOE, PCOO, and Japan Gas Corporation, November 2019.

Dionesio Ampontas, a 70-year-old proud graduate of the Alternative Learning System in Panabo City, Davao del Norte, shows that it is never too late to learn.
Photo Credit: DepEd

Ensuring Greater Access to Quality Education and Training

Education is one of the most essential aspects of human development. It empowers our people to realize their personal goals and actively contribute to national development. Thus, it is my commitment to provide every Filipino this fundamental enabler by making quality education affordable and accessible to all.

The reforms we have implemented in the education sector are crucial in ensuring the delivery of quality and relevant education and training. We have backed this up with the allocation of adequate funding for education. The DepEd and its attached agencies, State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and TESDA collectively received the largest portion of the 2020 budget at PhP692.6 billion.[119]

119 DBM, January 2020.

Provided a Conducive Learning Environment and Inclusive Education for All[120]

While we continue to build upon existing programs, we remain committed to creating a positive learning experience for our students. From July 2016 up to May 2020, a total of 137,098 new classrooms were constructed nationwide.[121] This included 35,052 new classrooms constructed in 2019. In addition, 1,906 school workshop buildings and other school facilities were constructed, rehabilitated, and improved. Furthermore, 7,876 technical vocational laboratories were also constructed last year. These helped us maintain the classroom-learner ratio within the 1:40 standard amidst increased enrollment. We also produced 18.64 million textbooks and other instructional materials to adequately provide learning resources that are aligned with the K to 12 curriculum.

The President and DepEd Secretary Leonor M. Briones lead the groundbreaking of the General Gregorio del Pilar National High School in Bulakan, Bulacan on January 10, 2019.
Photo Credit: PIA

Alongside these reforms, we also increased the number of teachers. From 2016 to 2019, we hired 194,273 teachers, covering around 95 percent of the 203,887 teaching positions created. This included 7,906 teachers hired in 2019 to help improve teacher-learner ratio.

In line with efforts to further bring education to all Filipinos, we extended financial assistance to 2.45 million grantees of programs that provide tuition subsidies to students who wish to pursue secondary education in public and private schools *(see Figure 4.5)*.

Figure 4.5 **Government Assistance and Subsidy Programs (Academic Year [AY] 2019-2020)**

EDUCATION SERVICE CONTRACTING
Tuition subsidy for qualified elementary students to pursue secondary education in private schools
1,078,778 grantees

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL VOUCHER
Financial assistance for senior high school (SHS) students to enroll in non-DepEd public and private institutions offering SHS
1,284,480 grantees

JOINT DELIVERY VOUCHER
Financial assistance for SHS students to enroll in qualified technical, vocational, and livelihood non-DepEd public and private institutions
88,933 grantees

Source: DepEd

120 DepEd, July 2020.
121 DPWH, July 2020.

We likewise improved our Alternative Learning System (ALS) to support out-of-school youth and adults by reinforcing the integration of technical-vocational training under the program. This is to enable ALS learners who were unable to enroll in formal basic education to complete the program through their acquired competencies. In 2019, 26,889 Community Learning Centers offered the improved ALS program.

For AY 2019-2020, 27.03 million students enrolled in formal education, slightly higher than the previous school year's 27.02 million enrollees. However, there was a decrease in enrolment in ALS from 823,013 to 739,872 in the same period.

Reshaped Higher Education to Promote Filipino Ingenuity

In the past four years of my Administration, we paved the way for accessible and equitable quality tertiary education for our Filipino youth, enriching their learning potential. In AY 2017-2018, we subsidized PhP8 billion worth of tuition, benefiting 889,000 students enrolled in SUCs, to lessen the burden on parents in sending their children to college.

Access to Free Tertiary Education

The timely passage of the landmark Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (UAQTEA) or RA no. 10931 in August 2017, which institutionalized the Free Higher Education (FHE), Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES), Student Loan Program, and Free Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), enabled greater access to college and vocational education *(see Figure 4.6)*.

To complement the implementation of the UAQTEA, we provided educational support to Filipino undergraduates through various programs *(see Table 4.10)*.

Figure 4.6 **UAQTEA Scholarship Programs**

	FHE	TES	STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM	FREE TVET
AY 2018-2019	• **PhP14.7 billion** for **1.18 million** (first semester) and **1.13 million** (second semester) students • **111 SUCs** and **78 CHED**-recognized universities and colleges	**PhP6.3 billion** to **284,000** poor but deserving students	Program had not yet started, pending the finalization of guidelines	**67,339** graduates
AY 2019-2020	• **PhP17.2 billion** for **1.34 million** (first semester) and **1.23 million** (second semester) students • **112 SUCs** and **103 CHED**-recognized universities and colleges	• **PhP23.7 billion** to **412,488** and **383,567** poor but deserving students for the first and second semesters, respectively, • **PhP1.8 billion** for **147,512** student-beneficiaries under the Tulong Dunong Program	**1,079** applications reviewed for AY 2020-2021	**23,672** graduates

Source: CHED

Table 4.10 **Other Assistance to Students**		
Programs	**Beneficiaries**	
	AY 2018-2019	**AY 2019-2020**
Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs)	PhP4.65 million to 374,538 students	PhP3.15 million to 157,263 students
Cash Grant for Medical Students	PhP61.24 million to 1,688 students (tuition fees only)	PhP161.96 million 1,789 students (tuition fees plus PhP37,000 stipend per year)
Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program (ETEEAP)[122]	2,501 graduates	Ongoing evaluation of applicants

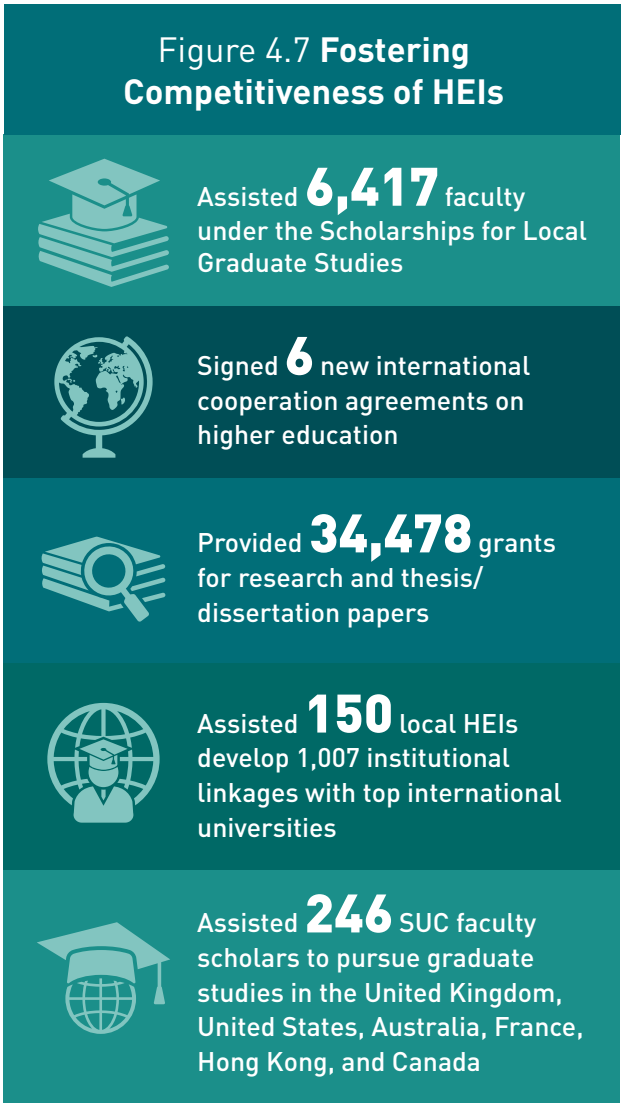
Source: CHED

Fostered Quality Education

To optimize our investments in quality education for the Filipino youth, we expanded our efforts to upgrade the capacity and quality of instruction, and fostered competitiveness of local higher education institutions (HEIs) *(see Figure 4.7)*:

CHED Chairman J. Prospero De Vera III meets with beneficiaries of Free Higher Education in Talisay, Negros Occidental on June 18, 2019.
Photo Credit: CHED

Figure 4.7 **Fostering Competitiveness of HEIs**



Source: CHED

122 ETEEAP is a comprehensive educational assessment program that accredits and gives equivalencies to the knowledge, skills, and values gained through relevant work experience of high school and/or college-level students. It also gives opportunity for out-of-school youth to obtain an equivalent college degree.

"I thank God for this opportunity to be a government scholar, and to President Rodrigo R. Duterte, whose dream is to make our country better through education."

Cherry Vee D. Siawan (Matigsalug Indigenous Group)
Bachelor of Science in Social Work
University of Mindanao
Photo Credit: CHED

"Tertiary Education Subsidy had a crucial role in my college education, and I believe that it will continue to be of great help to the Filipino youth. I thank President Rodrigo Duterte for helping me achieve my dreams!"

Pia O. Almeria
Cum Laude, Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education
Eastern Visayas State University
Photo Credit: CHED

We have likewise expanded the access of Filipino students to international quality education through the passage of RA no. 11448 or the Transnational Higher Education Act, which I signed into law in August 2019. This will allow local HEIs to partner with foreign universities to gain better access to globally accepted higher learning standards, expertise, and degree programs.

Upgraded Competencies for TVET

In our effort to improve alternative means of instruction for students, who opted to pursue TVET, we increased the number of scholars and upgraded the quality of available skills training programs. From 2016 to February 2020, we produced over 1.6 million scholar-graduates, who are now helping augment their family's income and contributing to the country's economy *(see Table 4.11)*.

Table 4.11 **TVET Scholarship Programs (2016 to February 2020)**

Programs	Graduates			
	2016	2017	2018	2019-2020
Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP)	271,561	316,289	346,486	265,166
Private Education Student Financial Assistance (PESFA)	18,462	19,674	21,042	20,364
Special Training for Employment Program (STEP)	33,592	65,190	68,491	94,415
UAQTEA[123]	-	-	67,339	23,672
Sub-Total	**323,615**	**401,153**	**503,358**	**403,617**
Total			**1,631,743**	

Source: TESDA

123 Started its implementation in 2018.

Our efforts to upgrade the competencies of our graduates have significantly improved the employability of TVET graduates from 66.25 percent in 2016 to 84.15 percent in 2019.[124] The high employment rate of graduates indicates that more Filipinos are being given better opportunities to uplift their living condition. Thus, my Administration will continue to support the TESDA in ensuring that we meet our TVET goals *(see Table 4.12)*.

Table 4.12 **TVET Accomplishments**

Indicator	Baseline	Accomplishment			Target[125]
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022
Certification rate of TVET graduates increased (%)[126]	91.3	93	92	93	87
Employment rate of TVET graduates increased (%)	66.25	71.87	68.58	84.15	69.39
PESFA beneficiaries increased (cumulative)	18,462	37,928	57,746	78,466	150,000
TWSP beneficiaries increased (cumulative)	271,561	584,371	906,500	1,206,871	1. 2 million

Source: TESDA

Sustaining the Provision of Social Safety Nets

No country can truly maximize her productive potential unless each and every citizen enjoys a comfortable and secure life. Unfortunately, many Filipino households remain vulnerable to crises and risks. Thus, we provided disadvantaged Filipinos the essential social safety nets to help them meet their immediate needs as they transition to a better life.

It is also my hope that the improvements we have made in our social protection programs shall continue to lessen the adverse impact our economic reforms may have had on our people, particularly the less fortunate, and empower them to become active participants in development.

Strengthened the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)[127]

The 4Ps, which was launched in 2008 and institutionalized in 2019 when I signed into law RA no. 11310 or the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino* Program Act, continues to be one of our primary social safety net programs. It seeks to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty through investments in human capital, particularly on the health and education of children who belong to poor households, through

124 2019 Study on the Employability of TVET Graduates.
125 Per PDP 2017-2022 Results matrix, NEDA cumulative targets for PESFA and TWSPI (at 25,000 and 200,000 beneficiaries per year, respectively), and National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan (NTESDP) 2018-2022 Annual Target Indicator, on the employment rate of TVET graduates.
126 The TESDA informed NEDA that, among others, the certification rate was conservatively targeted due to the eight percent average growth rate from 1995-2016, and the low annual average increase of 1.33 percent, which was observed from 2011 to 2016.
127 DSWD, June 2020.

the provision of cash grants for a maximum of seven years.

From July 2016 to May 2020, the program covered 41,632 barangays in all 145 cities and 1,482 municipalities in 80 provinces nationwide, with 4.31 million household beneficiaries served (*see Tables 4.13 and 4.14, and Figure 4.8*).[128]

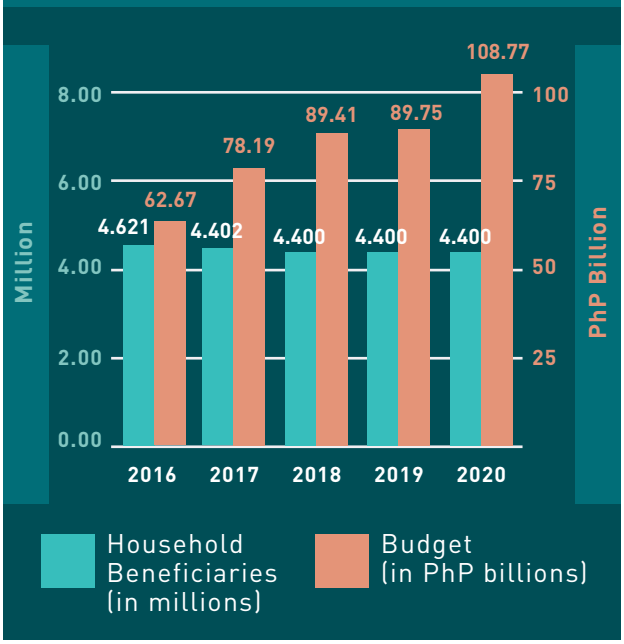
Table 4.13 **4Ps Household Beneficiaries (as of May 2020)**

Region	Households Served
NCR	220,751
CAR	60,252
I	205,616
II	105,197
III	293,878
IV-A	317,302
IV-B	194,902
V	368,314
VI	321,301
VII	285,368
VIII	280,243
IX	299,006
X	266,556
XI	257,568
XII	248,709
CARAGA	189,070
BARMM	397,214
Total	**4,311,247**

Source: DSWD

We have constantly increased the program's budget from PhP62.67 billion in 2016 to PhP108.77 billion in 2020. This includes the provision of PhP600 monthly rice allowance to all active and compliant households since 2017.

Figure 4.8 **Target Household Beneficiaries vis-à-vis Program Budget**



Source: DSWD

We have continously improved the distribution of grants through the DSWD's collaboration with the LBP. We are also engaging other service providers such as local rural banks and cooperatives as partner conduits to better facilitate the release of cash assistance.

The 4Ps is a commitment that the Philippine government has been continuously upholding to give poor families a fighting chance to break away from the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

128 DSWD, July 2020.

Table 4.14 ***Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino*** **Program Packages**[129]

Type of Grant	Amount released (PhP Billion)	Amount of Grant
Education Grant	24.49	•PhP300 every month per child in daycare and elementary school •PhP500 every month per child in junior high school •PhP700 every month per child in senior high school
Health and Nutrition Grant	21.38	•PhP750 per month for each household over a period of 12 months
Rice Subsidy	16.74	•PhP7,200 per year at PhP600 per month

Source: DSWD

In September 2019, we launched the nationwide assessment of the 4Ps to check the improvement in the lives of the beneficiaries using the Social Welfare and Development Indicators (SWDI) tool of the DSWD. Under the SWDI, the households' well-being is measured according to three levels, i.e., survival, subsistence, or self-sufficiency.

The result of the 2019 SWDI assessment showed that out of the 1.98 million beneficiaries assessed, majority or 69.25 percent (1.36 million) are classified within the subsistence level (level 2); 30.46 percent (606,074) are at the self-sufficiency level (level 3), and only 0.29 percent (5,803) are classified under the survival level (level 1).[130] While assessment of beneficiaries is conducted yearly, within the year, we regularly monitor their status and provide the appropriate interventions to those who are at levels 1 and 2 until they achieve level 3 status and are able to graduate from the program.

We have likewise intensified the monitoring of the compliance of beneficiaries with the conditionalities of the 4Ps to serve as basis for release of grants. I am pleased to note that compliance with the three conditionalities (education, health, and family development sessions) among the 4Ps beneficiaries is at 95.89 percent.

As we continue to empower and build the socioeconomic resilience of the poor and vulnerable, we have also prioritized qualified-household beneficiaries of

129 DSWD, June 2020.
130 In the survival level, the beneficiary has no internal and external resources, thus, the households are unable to resolve problems and survive in a daily basis; in the subsistence level, the households have some resources and alternatives to surpass basic needs daily; while in the self-sufficiency level, the households have other sources of income and can stand without interventions from the government.

Mrs. Clarissa Mendiola and her family, a 4Ps beneficiary
Photo Credit: DSWD

Reaping the fruits of hard labor

"Taos puso po akong nagpapasalamat na kami ay naging bahagi ng 4Ps sa loob ng maraming taon. Malaki po ang naitulong ng programa sa akin bilang isang ina. Naging malaking tulong ang mga natatanggap namin kada dalawang buwan na cash grant mula sa programa, lalong-lalo na sa pagsuporta sa pag-aaral ng aking mga anak. Bilang isang miyembro ng programa sa loob ng ilang taon, masasabi ko na ako ay handa nang grumaduate sa programa upang mabigyan ng oportunidad na mapabilang ang iba pang katulad ko na nangangailangan".

Source: DSWD

the 4Ps in the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), giving them access to gainful employment or livelihood opportunities *(see Table 4.15)*.

Table 4.15 **Household Beneficiaries of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (2016 to 2nd Quarter 2020)**

Year	Target	Served	Percentage Accomplishment
2016	378,822	295,813	78
2017	297,594	196,418	66
2018	153,609	189,922	124
2019	53,131	55,779	105
2020 (2nd quarter)	58,399	2,244	3.8

Pre-implementation and social preparations are done in the first semester and grant is released in the second semester
Source: DSWD

Sustained the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) Program

We started the implementation of the UCT in 2018 as a tax reform mitigation program under the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law to assist around 10 million beneficiaries of the 4Ps, Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens (SPISC) Program, and other poor households in the *Listahanan*[131] database for three years, which will end this year. In particular, we provided unconditional cash grants to poor households, families, and individuals who may not benefit from the lower income tax rates but may be adversely affected by rising prices.

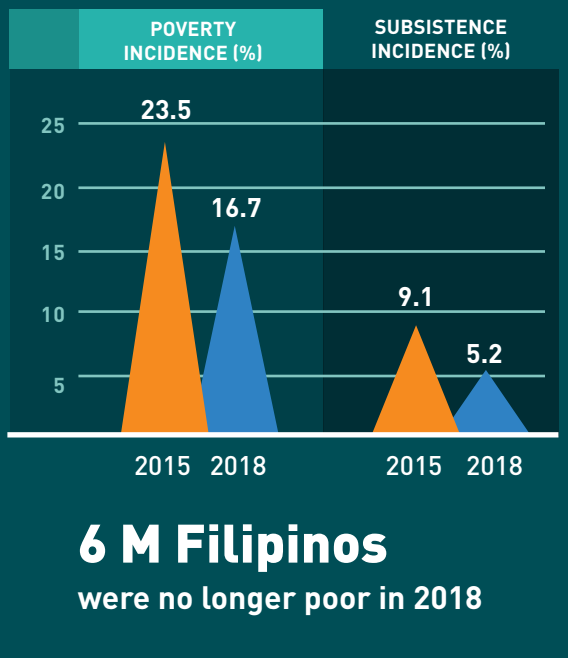
The KALIPI SLP Association of Barangay Poblacion, Kidapawan City takes pride in their quality-processed vegetables and fruit products.
Photo Credit: DSWD

131 The *Listahanan* or the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) is an information management system that identifies who and where the poor are in the country. The system makes available to national government agencies and other social protection stakeholders a database of poor families as reference in identifying potential beneficiaries of social protection programs.

Qualified beneficiaries were each entitled to annual cash grants of PhP2,400 for 2018, with the amount increased to PhP3,600 for 2019 and 2020. From 2018 to 2019, we released PhP43.4 billion to 9.2 million beneficiaries.[132]

Sustained and more inclusive economic growth, as well as our social protection programs, particularly the 4Ps, have resulted in substantial drop in poverty incidence *(see Figure 4.9)*. **From 23.5 percent of the population in 2015, the proportion of people living below the poverty line was dramatically reduced to 16.7 percent in 2018**. This represents the lowest poverty rate ever recorded equivalent to around 6 million Filipinos lifted out of poverty. The effective social protection measures we have been implementing seek to bring us closer to achieving the 14 percent poverty incidence target that we set under the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022.[133]

Figure 4.9 **Poverty Incidence among Population (2015 and 2018)**



Source: NEDA

Provided Immediate Relief and Facilitated Early Recovery of Disaster Victims/Survivors[134]

In January 2020, Taal Volcano erupted, affecting thousands of families and causing millions of pesos in damages. In response, we provided disaster assistance totaling PhP21.22 million in food and non-food items to 122,062 families or 458,766 individuals who were affected by the eruption.

Furthermore, we deployed quick response teams as camp managers, monitored the disaster-affected localities, provided resource augmentation to the LGUs, and distributed relief goods such as family food packs, and hygiene and sleeping kits.

Promoted the Rights of Children and the Elderly

Supported Healthy Development of Children. The right to adequate nutrition is a fundamental right of children. Consequently, to improve children's nutritional status during the critical stage of child development, I signed into law RA no. 11037 or the *Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang*

132 DSWD, July 2020.
133 NEDA, July 2020; PSA 2015 and 2018 Updated Statistics, June 2020.
134 DSWD, July 2020.

The President, together with DSWD Secretary Bautista, leads the distribution of family food packs to the victims affected by the Taal Volcano eruption during his visit to the Batangas City Sports Coliseum on January 14, 2020.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Pilipino Act in 2018. It institutionalized the National Feeding Program for undernourished children.

The DepEd's school-based feeding program for undernourished children has shown a positive impact in mitigating nutrition deficiencies of public school children and in keeping them in school. In 2019, 1.8 million children benefited from the program, which helped improve the nutritional status of 71.28 percent of the total beneficiaries.[135]

We also continued the DSWD's Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) wherein children aged two to five who attend child development centers and supervised neighborhood play were provided with hot meals using indigenous or locally-produced food for 120 days *(see Table 4.16)*.

A pupil of Gaub Elementary School in Cabatuan, Iloilo enjoys the nutritious food during the conduct of SFP.
Photo Credit: DSWD

Table 4.16 **SFP Children Served (2016 to 2019)**

Year	Children Served (in millions)
2016	1.80
2017	1.53
2018	1.67
2019	1.69

*The next cycle of the SFP will commence at the start of AY 2020-2021.
Source: DSWD

135 DepEd, July 2020.

Through the SFP, we aim to augment the feeding program for children that is managed by LGUs; develop the knowledge, attitude and practices of children, parents and caregivers through health and nutrition education; and improve and sustain the nutritional status of children. Children beneficiaries are weighed at the start of the feeding period and three months thereafter to determine their nutritional status. An amount of PhP15 per child per day is allocated for a maximum of 120 feeding days.[136]

Catered to the Needs of the Elderly.[137] We continuously cater to the needs of our indigent senior citizens who are frail, sickly, or with disability and those not receiving any pension or support from their relatives for their basic needs. This is done through the SPISC Program, which provides a monthly stipend of PhP500 released in lump sum every semester.

We have continuously increased SPISC target beneficiaries, from 1.38 million in 2016 to 3.80 million in 2019 and served 2.69 million in 2019 *(See Figure 4.17)*.

Table 4.17 **SPISC Program Beneficiaries Served (2016 to 2019)**

Year	Indigent Senior Citizens	
	Target (in millions)	Served (in millions)
2016	1.38	1.31
2017	2.71	2.68
2018	3.00	3.15
2019	3.80	2.69

Source: DSWD

Presidential Adviser on Legislative Affairs Secretary Adelino Sitoy, holds a dialogue with senior citizens on issues and challenges pertaining to the Social Pension Program. *Photo Credit: Presidential Legislative Liaison Office*

SPISC beneficiaries receive their cash assistance from the DSWD at the Senior Citizens' Center, Barangay Zone III, City of Koronadal, South Cotabato in January 2020. *Photos credit: DSWD*

136 DSWD, July 2020.
137 Ibid.

Continued Provision of Fuel Discounts and Subsidies to Jeepney Drivers and Operators under the *Pantawid Pasada* Program[138]

To mitigate the impact of higher fuel prices on jeepney drivers and operators, we collaborated with oil companies to provide them with fuel discounts.

In 2018, we provided *Pantawid Pasada* Fuel Subsidy Cards in the amount of PhP5,000 to 113,953 beneficiaries. In 2019, we released the second tranche of the subsidy in the amount of PhP20,514.76 to 110,382 beneficiaries nationwide.

Pantawid Pasada Program Fuel Card
Photo Credit: DOTr

Ensuring Access to Responsive Health Care for All

I remained steadfast in my commitment to prioritize the well-being of the Filipino people. Following the passage and implementation of RA no. 11223 or the Universal Health Care Act in 2019, we continued to institute key reforms and policies to combat corruption in the health sector and ensure that our people shall be able to enjoy the full benefits of the law. I acknowledge that this is still work in progress but we are intensifying our efforts to provide optimum healthcare services to all.

Established more *Malasakit* Centers[139]

In the interest of easing the financial burden of healthcare costs on poor and financially incapacitated patients and their families, I signed into law RA no. 11463 or the *Malasakit* Centers Act on December 3, 2019. Anchored on the Universal Health Care Act, it adopts a multi-sectoral and streamlined approach in addressing health issues and facilitates the provision of medical and financial assistance through the establishment of one-stop shops in public hospitals. This has allowed our poor patients to focus more on getting well rather than worrying about the time and resources needed to seek medical assistance from different government agencies. As of July 2020, 74 *Malasakit* centers have been established across the country to

138 DOTr, July 2020.
139 OPAV, Malasakit Center Database, July 2020.

efficiently provide access to medical financial assistance through representatives from the DOH, PhilHealth, DSWD, and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), who are deployed to these centers *(see Figure 4.10)*.

Figure 4.10 **Malasakit Centers (2018 to July 2020)**

CAR — 1
Baguio City

REGION 1 — 2
Dagupan City
Vigan City

REGION III — 6
Tarlac City
Bataan
Baler, Aurora
City of San Fernando
Malolos, Bulacan
Cabanatuan City

NCR — 15
Quezon City (6)
Manila
Navotas City
Malabon City
Valenzuela City
San Juan City
Pasay City
Pasig City
Taguig City
Paranaque City

REGION IV-B — 2
Puerto Princesa City
Romblon

REGION VI — 4
Roxas City
Iloilo City
Kalibo, Aklan
Bacolod City

REGION VII — 8
Cebu City (2)
Mandaue City
Lapu-Lapu City
Tagbilaran City
Talisay City
Siquijor
Dumaguete City

REGION IX — 4
Zamboanga City
Dipolog City
Dapitan City
Pagadian City

BARMM — 3
Maguindanao
Tawi-Tawi City
Marawi City

REGION II — 2
Ilagan City
Tuguegarao City

REGION IV-A — 5
Batangas City
Lucena, Quezon
Binangonan, Rizal
Antipolo City
Trece Martires, Cavite

REGION V — 3
Legazpi City
Naga City
Sorsogon City

REGION VIII — 7
Tacloban City
Maasin City
Catarman
Biliran
Catbalogan City
Borongan City
Ormoc City

REGION X — 4
Iligan City
Cagayan de Oro City (2)
Ozamiz City

CARAGA — 2
Surigao
Butuan City

REGION XI — 3
Tagum City
Montevista, Compostela Valley
Davao

REGION XII — 3
General Santos City
Cotabato City
Sultan Kudarat

Source: OPAV

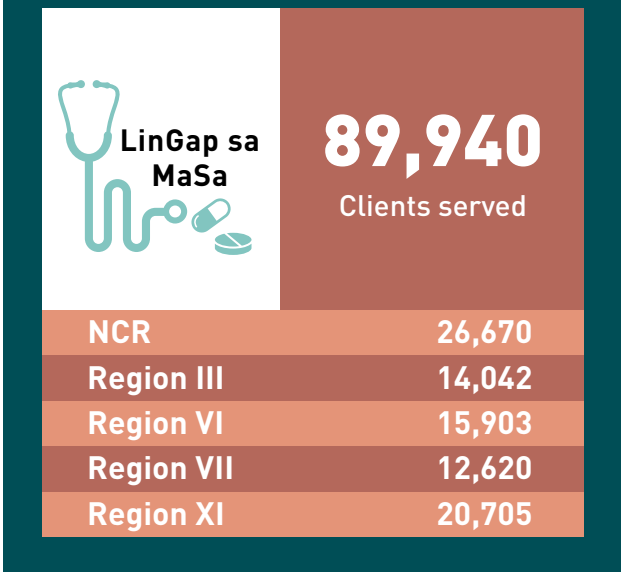
Sustained the *Lingap at Gabay Para sa May Sakit (LinGap sa MaSa)*[140]

Through the *LinGap sa MaSa* program launched in 2017, we continued to provide indigent patients with free medicines and assistance to avail of other medical needs and treatment such as dialysis and chemotherapy. Implemented by the DSWD, clients are assisted through help desks established in 29 identified

140 DSWD, Performance Report, CY 2020 1st Quarter.

hospitals in five regions in the country. As of March 2020, we have served 89,940 clients nationwide, utilizing PhP878.75 million or 87.88 percent of the program's PhP1 billion fund *(see Figure 4.11)*.

Figure 4.11 **Number of Clients Served by LinGap sa MaSa (2017 to March 2020)**



Source: DSWD

Strengthened the National Health Insurance Program (NHIP)[141]

Under the Universal Health Care Act, all Filipinos are automatically enrolled into the NHIP. This assures our people of equitable access to affordable healthcare services and further protects them from the financial burden of costly medical treatment. As of 2019, over 108 million Filipinos were estimated to have been enrolled as members of the PhilHealth, either as direct or indirect contributors, whose premiums are subsidized by the national government. In the same year, the PhilHealth paid approximately PhP137 billion to cover membership benefits. This includes 2,446,293 million claims amounting to PhP25.05 billion covering the top ten medical cases, such as pneumonia, dengue fever, and acute gastroenteritis.

To ensure that our investments in the health care system are put to good use, we aggressively addressed alleged fraudulent activities that have unfortunately tainted the NHIP. We have likewise undertaken corrective measures, including the imposition of penalties on and revocation of accreditation of erring facilities and health care professionals, to ensure that the provision of healthcare services will not be compromised. We have also instituted needed reforms in the PhilHealth and continue to update our systems to help guard against and prevent the occurrence of schemes that seek to cheat the government and the Filipino people of money intended for deserving patients.

As such, I appeal to you, my fellow Filipinos, to maintain your trust in the integrity of our health care system even as we remain vigilant in protecting the NHIP against abuse. With our initiated reforms and continued budgetary support, we hope to further strengthen the NHIP and continue to bring quality health care to our people.

141 PhilHealth, July 2019.

The President, together with DOLE Secretary Silvestre Bello III, warmly welcomes the repatriated OFWs from Saudi Arabia in June 2017.
Photo Credit: DOLE

Fostering Secure and Meaningful Livelihood

A secure and stable source of income is key towards improving our people's well-being. Thus, one of the primary objectives of my Administration is to ensure that all Filipinos are provided with adequate opportunities to earn a meaningful livelihood, whether through formal employment or business endeavors that would suit their current circumstances.

Protected and Promoted the Welfare of Filipino Workers Here and Abroad[142]

Improved Labor Force

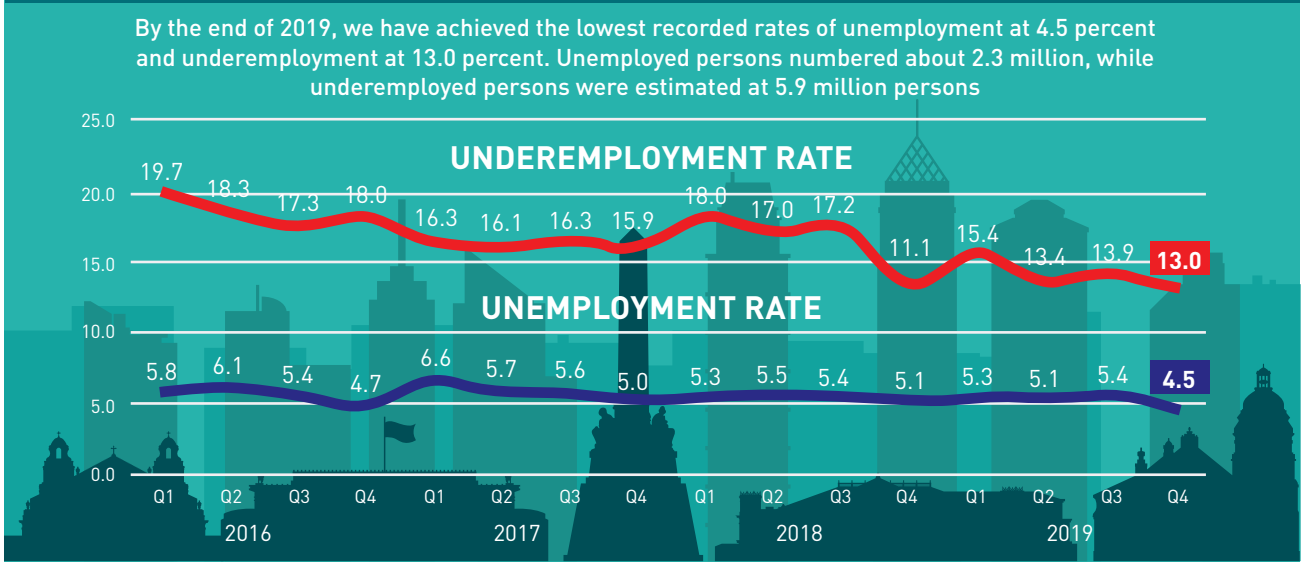
Along with our steadily growing economy leading up to 2019, our labor market continued to record positive gains as employment rates rose from 94.7 percent in 2018 to 94.9 percent in 2019. This brought the total number of employed Filipinos to 42.4 million. Meanwhile, unemployment and underemployment[143] rates dropped to its lowest in decades at 4.5 percent and 13 percent, respectively, by the end of 2019 *(see Figure 4.12)*.[144]

Implemented Employment Facilitation Programs

With about 2.3 million Filipinos still unemployed in 2019,[145] we continued to link our job-seekers to employment opportunities that would best suit

142 DOLE, July 2020.
143 Employed persons who expressed the desire to have additional hours of work in their present job, to have an additional job, or to have a new job with longer working hours are considered underemployed.
144 PSA, December 2019; DOF, July 2020.
145 PSA, December 20, 2019.

Figure 4.12 **Underemployment and Unemployment rate (2016 to 2019)**



Source: DOF

their skills. Given that a substantial portion[146] of the unemployed belonged to the youth sector, we implemented various programs to capacitate them with relevant work experience and enhance their access to employment opportunities *(see Figure 4.13)*.

Protected Workers' Rights and Maintained Industrial Peace

Recognizing that our labor force is the main driver behind our country's growth and development, we continued to promote and protect the rights and welfare of our workers, especially the vulnerable *(see Figure 4.14)*. We also remained aggressive in our efforts towards ending "end of contract" schemes and other forms of illegal contracting by abusive employers through strict enforcement of labor standards and institutionalization of policies that promote workers' right to security of tenure. To this end, we hope that everyone in the business sector would be reminded of their shared responsibility in improving the lives of our workers by providing stable career opportunities and humane working conditions.

Figure 4.13 **Accomplishments under the Employment Facilitation Program (July 2016 to March 2020)**

Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES)

560,086 SPES beneficiaries assisted that have completed college and techvoc education

GIP

Government Intership Program

95,065 youth assisted

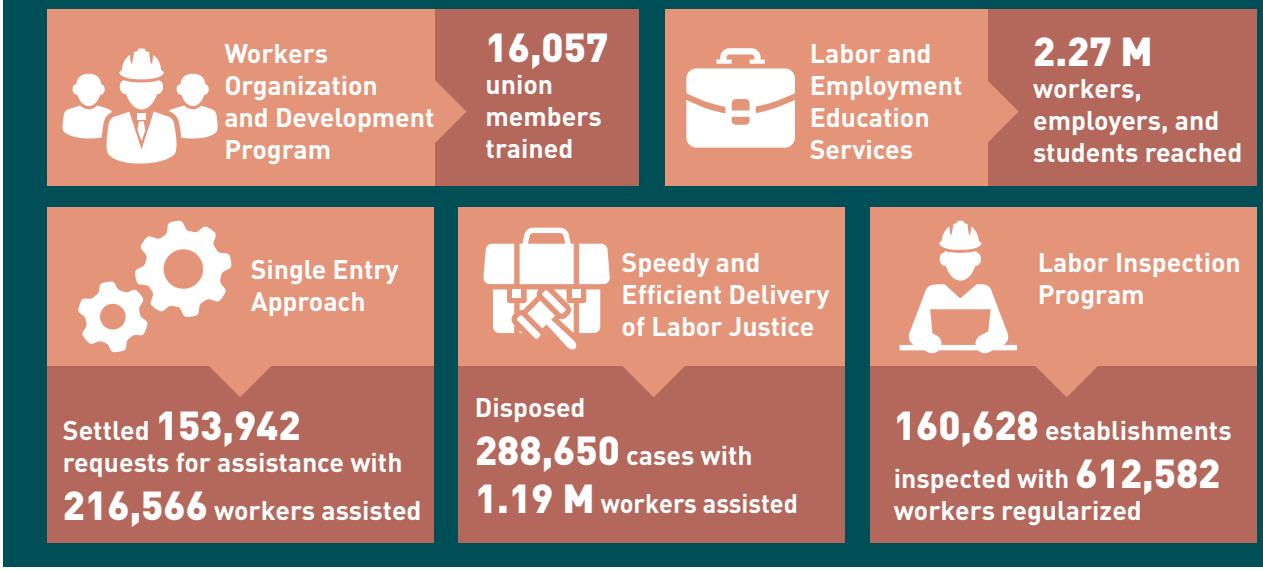
Public Employment Service (PES)

8.86M qualified jobseekers referred for job placement

Source: DOLE

146 Youth (15-24 years old) unemployment rate in 2019 was at 44.8 percent (PSA, December 2019).

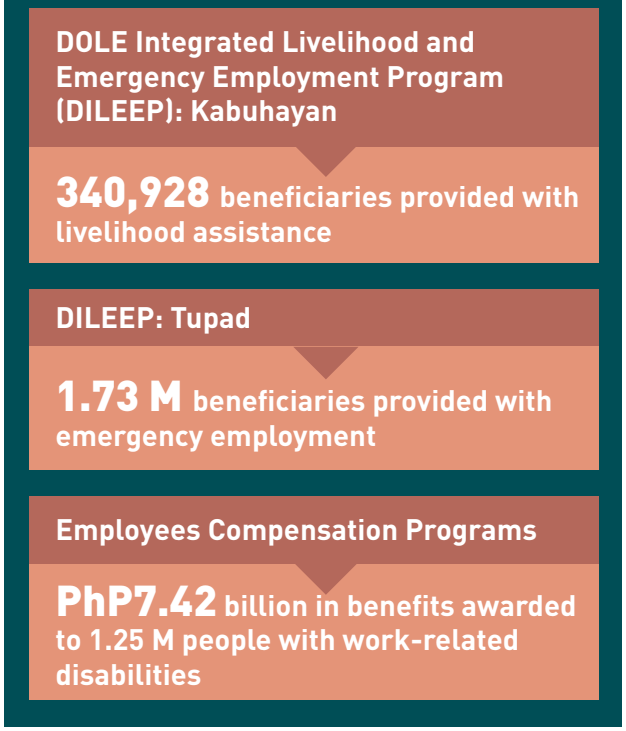
Figure 4.14 **Accomplishments under Programs on the Protection of Worker's Rights and Maintenance of Industrial Peace (July 2016 to March 2020)**



Source: DOLE

Meanwhile, we implemented social protection programs for our vulnerable workers to provide them immediate relief against income loss due to risks and contingencies arising out of crisis or disasters *(see Figure 4.15)*.

Figure 4.15 **Accomplishments under the Workers Protection and Welfare Program (July 2016 to March 2020)**



Source: DOLE

Ensured Protection of OFWs

I know that being apart from loved ones demands great emotional endurance from our OFWs as they temporarily leave their families behind. Thus, we ensured that Filipino workers abroad shall be treated with dignity as we provided various assistance for distressed workers and supported advocacies that seek to protect migrants from abuse, including trafficking in persons *(see Figure 4.16)*.

Pursued and reviewed labor agreements. The failure of previous Administrations to institute mechanisms and regulations

to ensure the protection of OFWs has allowed their abuse in the hands of foreign employers. Thus, we maintain our government's presence at every stage of the migration cycle to protect and promote the rights of our Filipino workers abroad.

The President meets with OFWs.
Photo Credit: PCOO

The landmark signing of the Bilateral Labor Agreement with Kuwait in May 2018 is a clear message that we are determined to put a stop to human rights violations and further loss of lives among our OFWs. In this connection, I am pleased to note that the Philippine Government was able to work out a more specific agreement with the Government of Kuwait, including a new harmonized standard employment contract for OFWs, which, among others, bars employers from committing inhumane acts.

Evacuated OFWs in the Middle East. The start of the year has brought us several challenges other than the current health pandemic. The tensions between the USA and Iran, for example, had endangered

Figure 4.16 **Accomplishments on Empowerment and Protection of OFWs (July 2016 to March 2020)**

Documentation of OFWs
8.96 M contracts processed

Assistance against Illegal Recruitment / Trafficking-in-Person Victims (AIR-TIP)
89,962 OFWs provided with assistance

Assistance to Nationals Fund (ATN)
311,489 OFs assisted

Legal Assistance Fund (LAF)
14,926 OFs assisted

On-Site Program and Services for OFWs
3.27 M OFWs served

Amnesty Program
17,482 OFWs repatriated

Sources: DOLE, DFA

the lives of Filipinos in the Middle East. Hence, in January this year, I directed the military to evacuate thousands of Filipinos from Iran and Iraq. Relatedly, I sent off two of our ships, the BRP Davao del Sur and BRP Ramon Alcaraz, to save Filipino workers who were caught in the tensions in the Middle East. Since we started repatriating distressed OFWs from the Middle East until the onset of the pandemic, we were able to bring home 88,414 *kababayans*.

With the undeniable impact of the pandemic, more OFWs are expected to lose their jobs and find their way home to the Philippines. As such, we are intensifying efforts to not only repatriate our distressed Filipino workers but also provide livelihood opportunities to help them earn a decent

Presidential Adviser on OFWs, Secretary Abdullah D. Mama-o (standing), with Philippine Embassy Chargé d'Affaires and Consul General to Kuwait Mohd. Noordin Pendosina N. Lomondot (left), meets with the Filipino community in Kuwait on January 18, 2020 to discuss, among others, contingency plans amid tensions in the Middle East.
Photo Credit: DFA

living. Recognizing the hard work and indispensable contribution of OFWs to nation-building, it is our ultimate goal to reward their sacrifices by providing them with sustainable work and livelihood opportunities at home.

Supported Entrepreneurship Towards Inclusive Growth

I have emphasized that when employment is not an option, entrepreneurship shall be advocated. However, recognizing that it takes skills and experience to run and set up a business, we continued to promote MSME development by introducing various support mechanisms and providing the needed assistance for Filipino entrepreneurs in establishing and growing their businesses.

RA no. 11337 or the Innovative Start-Up Act

I signed into law RA no. 11337 to provide startup founders and aspiring

Distressed Worker from UAE now owns Beauty Salon

Agnes Luna, from Sasa, Davao City is one of the successful beneficiaries of the *Balik Pinas! Balik Hanapbuhay!* Program, which provides immediate relief to returning OFWs.

As an active member of the OWWA and eligible for the program, Agnes received livelihood assistance worth PhP20,000 in July 2018. She considers OWWA a part of her success, as the scholarship and livelihood assistance she acquired helped her earn an income without leaving her family.

Source: DOLE

entrepreneurs strategies in starting-up their business and capacitate them through exchange programs and training. With the implementation of the law, we aim to provide further benefits and incentives to startups and startup enablers in the country through the programs of the DTI, DICT, and DOST. We also hope to create a competitive business startup community in the country through these efforts.

Kapatid Mentor Me (KMME) Program

To capacitate our budding entrepreneurs, we provided 8,275 mentees with intensive mentoring and coaching through the KMME. I am glad to share that, in a survey among KMME graduates, 1,075 reported that their

sales increased by more than 10 percent after undergoing the Program.[147]

Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso (P3)

We also released almost PhP6 billion in P3 loans to small entrepreneurs and marginalized communities and assisted microenterprises raise capital at low interest rates of 2 to 2.5 percent. This provided our small business owners the necessary capital to start and grow their businesses, while avoiding being victimized by opportunistic loan sharks.

Negosyo Centers

In our effort to further support the development of MSMEs, we established 883 *Negosyo* Centers nationwide since I assumed office, bringing the total number of *Negosyo* Centers to 1,130. These provided MSMEs with services such as business name registration, business advisory, business information and advocacy, product development, trade promotion, financing facilitation, and investment promotion.

Based on a survey conducted by the DTI among *Negosyo* Center clients, a total of 707 respondents representing 80 percent of total respondents claimed that an increase in gross sales since they availed of services in *Negosyo* Centers.

Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs)

As we encourage our fellow Filipinos to migrate from densely populated urban centers to explore potential opportunities in the countryside, we look to develop the informal sector as a means of livelihood for our people. Relatedly, to help informal sector microenterprises integrate into the mainstream economy, we continued to encourage the formation of BMBEs through our *Negosyo* Centers. In fact, from 2018 to 2019, there were 68,273 BMBEs registered with the DTI, which had access to various incentives. These include income tax and Minimum Wage Law exemption, and services including priority status in special credit windows; technology transfer, production, and management training; and marketing assistance programs. It is my fervent hope that these initiatives could lead to more livelihood opportunities to help more Filipinos find meaningful livelihood opportunities.

We recognize that not all Filipinos may be equipped to set up and manage their own business. Thus, for those who have the capital but are lacking in experience, franchising has become a viable option. According to the Philippine Franchising Association (PFA), there are close to 900 franchises operating in the country.[148]

Unfortunately, the characteristics that make franchising attractive are the same qualities that make it vulnerable to abuse. It has come to my attention that there is no law nor government agency that actively regulates franchises. Hence, I call on the DTI and other concerned agencies to come up with measures to ensure fair business practices and support small franchisees who are prone to exploitation by big franchisors.

147 DTI, June 2020.
148 PFA, July 2020.

While much has been achieved towards providing livelihood opportunities for our countrymen in the first three and a half years, existing jobs and businesses have been heavily affected by the blows brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we shall make the necessary adjustments moving forward to help our workforce and businesses recover.

Farmer-beneficiaries receive their SURE Aid cash cards.
Photo Credit: DA

Making Financial Services More Accessible to All Filipinos[149]

We continue to remove barriers that exclude Filipinos from accessing financial services that would broaden their economic opportunities and further improve their lives. By extending financial services for the unserved and underserved, specifically the low-income, disadvantaged, and marginalized sectors of our society, we are making it easier for our countrymen to better plan for their future under the National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI).[150]

As a result, 29 percent of Filipinos now have bank accounts, from just 27 percent in 2017, or an additional five million.[151] This is a significant stride toward our financial inclusion objectives. The Philippines also remained as one of the top countries promoting financial inclusion, ranking fifth worldwide and first in Asia, along with India, based on the results of the Global Microscope 2019[152] study by the EIU.[153] The study recognized the country's recent efforts in promoting digital financial inclusion and financial literacy, and other initiatives such as the National Digital ID System and one-stop shop program for online government services.

149 BSP, July 2020; BSP 2019 Financial Inclusion Initiatives.
150 Provides the platform for public-private coordination and cooperation, and harmonization of policies and programs for financial inclusion.
151 BSP, 2019 Financial Inclusion Survey.
152 A benchmarking index that assesses the enabling environment for financial access in 55 countries. The 2019 Microscope featured 11 new gender-focused indicators that measured financial inclusion for both women and men.
153 BSP, Philippines maintains global leadership in financial inclusion, December 18, 2019.

Promoted Wider Reach of Financial Services

We have been supporting activities that will ensure the Filipinos' access to financial services even in rural areas and amid the current health pandemic. These include relaxation of identification requirements in banks and other formal money service providers, streamlining of licensing requirements for facilities that would offer electronic payment and financial services, and granting banks permission to serve clients through third party agents.

Forged Strategic Partnerships Towards Inclusive Development

We also strengthened cooperation with industries, development institutions, and other private sector organizations in the pursuit of financial inclusion.

Financial Education

Through the Economic and Financial Learning Programs of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), in partnership with key stakeholders,[154] we continue to promote greater awareness and understanding of essential economic and financial information to help Filipinos make well-informed financial choices. These programs could ultimately benefit around 29 million learners; 1.8 million civil servants, including 800,000 teachers; 140,000 armed forces personnel; 14 million Overseas Filipinos (OFs); 1.9 million fisherfolk; 10 million 4Ps beneficiaries; and 1.4 million MSMEs.

Expansion of the Financing Network of Negosyo Centers

To make financial products and services more accessible to MSMEs, we expanded the financial network of *Negosyo* Centers in the country by institutionalizing information sharing and connection between them and microfinance institutions (MFI). This will enable the 1,130 *Negosyo* Centers[155] of the country to refer MSMEs to appropriate financing windows and the MFIs to have more credit insight on the MSMEs being supported and served by *Negosyo* Centers.

Sustained Financial Inclusion Anchored on Innovation

Development of the Framework for Basic Deposit Accounts (BDA)

We developed the BDA to meet the needs of unbanked beneficiaries for a low-cost, no-frills deposit account opening as it removes prevalent barriers, such as cost, and lack of money and documentary requirements. Through this policy, more Filipinos have been encouraged to open formal accounts, which will provide not only a safe and convenient savings tool and gateway to digital payments, but also a means to access a gamut of financial services

154 Includes teachers and learners in the basic education system; OFs; unbanked/underbanked sectors, such as fisherfolk, 4Ps beneficiaries; and MSMEs; civil servants; and armed forces personnel.
155 DTI, June 2020.

ranging from credit to investments. Meanwhile, a preferential zero percent reserve requirement is granted to banks to encourage them to offer BDA.

As of the fourth quarter of 2019, there were 120 banks offering BDAs to over four million depositors, with total deposits of PhP3.5 million.[156]

Philippine Electronic Fund Transfer System and Operations Network (PESONet) and InstaPay

We established the PESONet and InstaPay as electronic payment services to make fund transfer and payment more convenient for Filipinos. Growing in popularity, PESONet volume increased from 300,000 in November 2017 to 2.6 million as of June 2020; while InstaPay volume rose from just 1,740 in April 2018 to 18.3 million in June 2020.

Legal Measures and Issuances

We also expanded the accessibility of various financial products nationwide for the low-income, MSME, and agriculture sectors *(see Table 4.18)*.

Table 4.18 **Legal Measures Implemented to Facilitate Financial Inclusion**

Measure	Aim
RA no. 11057 or the Personal Property Security Act	Facilitates the use of movable property[157] as collateral for both business and consumers credit
RA no. 11055 or the Philippine Identification System Act	Provides all Filipinos the means to establish a verifiable identity, which will enable them to use financial services more efficiently
RA no. 11127 or the National Payment Systems Act	Ensures access to safe and efficient payment systems to encourage confidence in using secure, convenient, and affordable payment services that are responsive to the needs of Filipinos
BSP Circular no. 940 or the Cash Agent Regulation	Allow banks to serve clients through cash agents (third party facilities) that can accept and disburse cash on behalf of the bank, perform Know-Your-Customer procedures, and collect and forward application documents for loan and account opening As of the fourth quarter of 2019, there were over 17,000 cash agents nationwide[158]

Source: BSP

Expanded Credit Opportunities

In line with my directive to eliminate usurious lending practices that enslave Filipino lendees, while expanding opportunities for those who would like to start

156 BSP, Q4 2019 Financial Inclusion Dashboard and List of Banks Offering BDAs.
157 Includes bank accounts, accounts receivables and secured sales contracts, inventory and raw goods, intellectual property rights, industrial and agricultural equipment, durable consumer goods, agricultural products, and vehicles.
158 Banks with cash agent operations increased from 11 banks in 2019 to 13 banks as of April 2020.

their business, we continue to make available to everyone various credit facilities, as follows:

P3[159]

Designed to help MSMEs become more viable, P3 aims to provide an alternative and affordable source of capital at not more than 2.5 percent monthly all-in interest rate and service charges. As of June 2020, PhP5.42 billion worth of loans were released to 150,320 beneficiaries. The P3 has also partnered with 434 microfinance institutions to make the program more accessible nationwide.

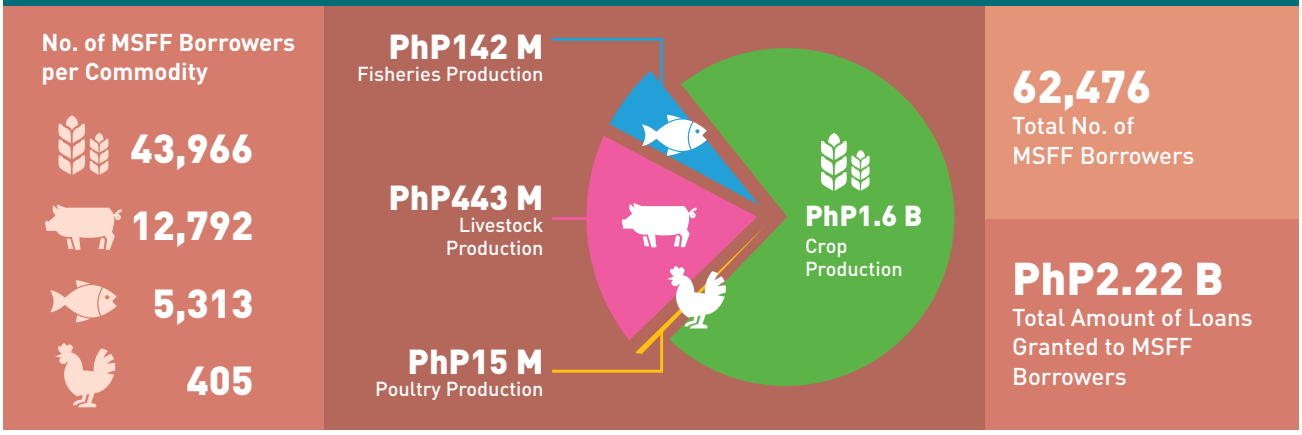
Credit Surety Fund (CSF)[160]

The CSF increases the credit worthiness of borrowers that would have difficulty accessing credit facilities due to insufficient collateral, limited credit histories, and inadequate financial records, among other barriers. Since the program started in 2008, 55 CSF cooperatives in 34 provinces and 21 cities have been established nationwide. A total of PhP5.7 billion worth of loans was also released to 17,424 MSME-beneficiaries covered by the CSF. Meanwhile, there are six CSF cooperatives[161] registered with the Cooperative Development Authority as of June 2020.

Production Loan Easy Access (PLEA)[162]

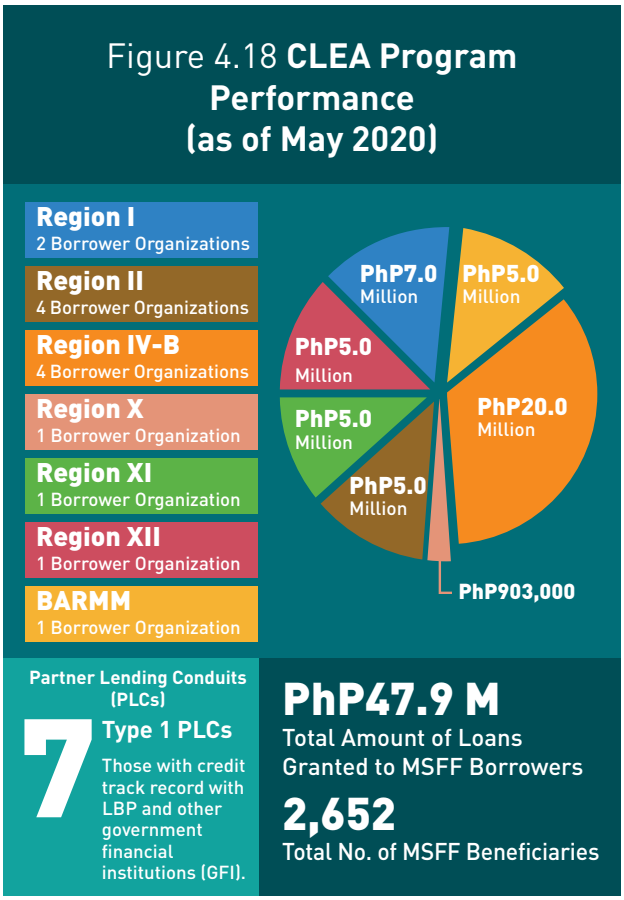
Designed to address the financial needs of marginalized small farmers and fisherfolk (MSFF), PLEA provides non-collateralized loans for agri-fishery production through cooperative banks, rural banks, cooperatives, and non-government organizations as lending conduits *(see Figure 4.17)*. From 2017 to May 2020, PhP2.2 billion in loans were granted to 62,476 MSFF borrowers.

Figure 4.17 **PLEA Program Performance (as of May 2020)**



Source: DA-ACPC

159 DTI, June 2020.
160 BSP, July 2020.
161 Located in Tacloban, Baguio, Santiago, and Tacurong Cities; and Cagayan and Benguet provinces.
162 ACPC, July 2020.



Source: DA-ACPC

Working Capital Loan Easy Access (CLEA)[163]

Since its launch in 2018 to May 2020, we provided PhP47.9 million loan assistance to 2,652 MSFF beneficiaries nationwide to finance their working capital requirements for trading, marketing, and processing of agri-fishery products *(see Figure 4.18)*.

SURE[164]

To support the immediate rehabilitation of agricultural and livelihood activities of MSFFs affected by natural calamities and other crises, we also provided PhP252.6 billion in loans to 21,211 MSFF borrowers from 2017 to May 2020.

Way Forward: Empowering the People Towards a Better Normal

My administration has taken great strides from merely responding to the people's basic needs to empowering and enabling them to provide for themselves. We have worked hard to provide affordable food, potable water, stable electricity, and decent shelter to all Filipinos; and invested in social protection programs, quality education, and health care to enable them to contribute as productive members of society. We have secured the necessary funding for programs aimed at supporting our people's continued development. Your government is working relentlessly to deliver the right interventions and conditions to pave the way towards a comfortable life for all Filipinos.

In this connection, I remain true to my pledge to provide for our people's needs and help lift our people out of poverty. Our existing social protection programs, especially the *4Ps*, have substantially helped in reducing poverty and promoting social equity. Unfortunately, the unexpected arrival of one of the worst health pandemics in the past century has taken us back a few steps. However, we will not

163 ACPC, July 2020.
164 Ibid.

be deterred but rather push forward to expand and continually fine-tune our social safety nets to safeguard the poor and the vulnerable, making them more responsive to future shocks. This includes the provision of basic social services to the poor and the new poor. We will also scale up our existing programs by leveraging new technologies and converging all the databases of the poor and the vulnerable.

In terms of food security, we will be adopting supportive policies and sustaining our investments to enhance food production, post-production, and procurement. We shall also modernize the agricultural sector in order to synergize linkages of the whole value chain from pre-production, production, processing, marketing, and consumption. This will maximize productivity and add value to benefit all the players in the system.

On water security, we will fast-track the completion of major water infrastructure projects to ensure access to safe and affordable water supply to 95 percent of households by 2022. Meanwhile, we shall further intensify efforts to increase the country's power generating capacity through more energy projects to achieve 100 percent electrification of all unelectrified households by 2022.

As part of our people's development, we will also continue to ensure access to quality education and improve the delivery of related services at all academic levels, through alternative modes of learning suitable to the current setting. This pandemic will not be a hindrance for our Filipino students to achieve their dream of receiving quality education and earning a diploma. We will make sure of this.

We will work hard to regain lost ground in our path towards economic development and help support the recovery of businesses to promote resurgence in livelihood opportunities for our people, especially our displaced OFWs. With the pandemic substantially contributing to loss of jobs, the government will intensify its efforts to help our people put up and sustain their own businesses. We will ensure that our MSMEs will be provided with an enabling environment characterized by responsive support services, access to adequate financing, and fair business practices, to include franchise and rental regulations, among others.

Reminded of the great need to have an efficient healthcare system, we will also strive to further strengthen our delivery of health services, in coordination with local governments and private enterprises nationwide. This is to help ensure that our people become healthier and stronger as we collectively aim to gain a foothold towards recovery.

Together, we shall overcome the challenges as we tread the path towards a comfortable life for our people.

"Let us all remain united in attaining sustainable peace and development that will last beyond this lifetime. With [the local government units'] help, I am confident that we can secure these gains for the younger generations to enjoy."

- The President's speech during the 2018 Presidential Award for Child-Friendly Municipalities and Cities at the Malacañan Palace on November 28, 2019

Photo Credit: PCOO

Chapter
5

Safeguarding the Dividends of Peace and Security

As a Mindanaoan, it is my fondest dream to one day achieve just and inclusive peace in our country. In the last four years, we have achieved great strides towards securing an inclusive and sustainable peace for the people in Mindanao. However, lawless elements continue to threaten our gains.

I will remain relentless in the war against illegal drugs, criminality, and terrorism. After all, our people can only enjoy the fruits of development if they feel safe. We owe it to the next generation to persevere in our collective aspiration so they can live in secure and progressive communities.

Winning the Fight against Insurgency and Terrorism

For decades, I have seen how lawless elements, including communist armed groups, thwart development initiatives in the countryside. The inequitable and unsustainable economic development of the past has turned rural areas into ripe recruitment grounds for terrorist groups. Insurgency feeds off the hungry and the hopeless. As our brothers and sisters become excluded from economic, social, and public services, they become prey to the manipulation of communist armed groups. This creates a vicious cycle of poverty and violence. I have seen too many families broken, lives lost, and children whose futures had become uncertain. We cannot afford to waste this opportunity to finally end insurgency and terrorism. Winning this battle would require more than military solutions alone, but a whole-of-nation approach.

Mobilizing the Nation Towards Peace and Development[165]

In 2018, I signed EO no. 70, creating the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), which institutionalized and facilitated convergence among our development, good governance, and peace and security interventions. This multi-pronged approach aims to address the root cause of insurgency and criminality through the 12 lines of effort: a) local government empowerment; b) international engagement; c) legal cooperation; d) strategic communication; e) basic services; f) livelihood and poverty alleviation; g) infrastructure and resource management; h) peace, law enforcement, and development support; i) situational awareness and knowledge management; j) localized peace engagement; k) Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) and Amnesty Program; and l) sectoral unification, capacity-building, and empowerment.

Since the NTF-ELCAC's activation, my Cabinet Secretaries have tirelessly worked with LGUs, communities, and non-government organizations, including religious groups, to

The President presides over the Joint NTF-ELCAC and AFP-PNP Command Conference in Malacañan Palace on November 18, 2019. Also in attendance are (from left to right): DILG Secretary Año, National Security Adviser Hermogenes C. Esperon, Jr., DA Secretary Dar, DepEd Secretary Briones, Cabinet Secretary Karlo A.B. Nograles, DTI Secretary Lopez, and DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.
Photo Credit: PCOO

165 NTF-ELCAC and NSC, July 7, 2020.

The President greets former rebels before distributing their benefits during a ceremony at the San Isidro Central School in Leyte on January 23, 2020. *Photo Credit: PCOO*

create transparent and inclusive communities that would undertake activities toward sustainable peace.

Fostered localized peace settlements and conflict resolution. In 2018, we started the implementation of the E-CLIP. This program provides various socioeconomic assistance to former members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) - New People's Army (NPA) - National Democratic Front (NDF) to help them transform their lives to become productive citizens and live a peaceful life with their family and community.

As of June 30, 2020, we facilitated the enrollment of 4,325 former rebels to the E-CLIP. Some of the assistance we extended to the beneficiaries under the E-CLIP include the following: *(see Figure 5.1)*

Figure 5.1 **E-CLIP Accomplishments as of June 30, 2020**

4,325
former rebels provided by the DILG with financial benefits worth PhP314.46 billion

2,105
former rebels covered under the DOLE's TUPAD Workers Program Enlistment and Integrated Livelihood Program

12
halfway houses constructed

1,592
beneficiaries of the Cooperative Development Authority's technical assistance or training for cooperative development, management, and operations

3,742
graduates of various TESDA skills training programs

460
former rebels covered under the DTI's livelihood trainings and seminars

53
former rebels given housing units

10,079*
benefitted from the DSWD's 4Ps-Modified Conditional Cash Transfer, Sustainable Livelihood Program, Supplementary Feeding Program, and Social Pension, among others

**includes individuals from affected communities*
Source: Task Force Balik-Loob

With E-CLIP's progress, we began to encourage rebels from other groups to lay down their arms and become productive and law-abiding members of society. In March 2020, I ordered the expansion of our reintegration efforts to cover not just former rebels but also former violent extremists.[166]

Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Michael Lloyd Dino meets with AFP officers in Region VII to discuss the status of security in the region. *Photo Credit: OPAV*

PCOO Secretary and concurrent CORDS for Region X Martin M. Andanar and DSWD Secretary Rolando Joselito D. Bautista launch Convergence Areas for Peace and Development Program on June 26, 2019 to synchronize peace and development efforts in Northern Mindanao. *Photo Credit: PCOO*

Intensifying Internal Security Operations[167]

The AFP has sustained its internal security operations, which have weakened the strength of the country's notorious armed groups.

Following are the notable accomplishments in 2019:

- Clearing of 13 out of 39 guerilla fronts, which is the highest number of cleared guerilla fronts in the past decade;

- Declaration of the CTG as *persona non grata* by 48 provinces, 609 cities and municipalities, 5,751 barangays, and 164 organizations, signifying the erosion of influence of the CPP-NPA-NDF among the local populace; and

- Rescue of 1,777 civilian hostages from the Maute Group, and neutralization of about 920 Daulah Islamiyah (DI) members that included Abu Sayyaf Group leader Isnilon Hapilon and other Maute Group key personalities.

Initiating Sustainable Development at the Grassroots[168]

Barangay Development Package. At the core of our whole-of-nation approach is empowering LGUs to lead the implementation of conflict resolution and peacebuilding programs at the barangay level nationwide. We have put in place mechanisms for LGUs

166 Administrative Order no. 25, s. 2020, which amended Administrative Order no. 10, s. 2018, entitled, "Centralizing all Government Efforts for the Reintegration of Former Rebels and creating for the Purpose an Inter-Agency Task Force."
167 DND, July 17, 2020.
168 NSC, July 15, 2020; OPAPP, July 18, 2020.

to identify issues and necessary government interventions, including development projects, in over 700 barangays cleared from the threat of the CTG. The proposed Barangay Development Package shall serve as an economic stimulus to fund development projects, transforming conflict-affected barangays into peace and progressive communities.

Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan Program. We continued to promote peace and facilitate socioeconomic development especially in conflict-affected and -vulnerable areas, particularly in the Cordilleras; Moro National Liberation Front areas needing socioeconomic assistance and development; and areas affected and/or vulnerable to conflict with the CTG.

Since 2016, we have enrolled more former combatants to PhilHealth. From only 14,713 individuals in 2016, the number increased by 64.43 percent, with 24,192 enrollees in 2019.

We also continue to support IPs through the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples' educational assistance program, with 561 grantees as of February 2020.

Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) Chairman Emmanuel F. Piñol, Taraka Mayor Nashiba Sumagayan, and the Development Bank of the Philippines Representative Ms. Angelita Aguhob sign a PhP128-million agreement aimed at improving irrigation capacity in Taraka, Lanao del Sur.
Photo Credit: MinDA

Seizing the Momentum of Peace in Mindanao

Development in Mindanao will hinge upon our success in securing conflict-affected and -vulnerable communities. In April 2019, I signed EO no. 79,[169] which implements the Annex on Normalization under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB). This has paved the way for the institutionalization of a multi-faceted peace and development strategy in the Bangsamoro. It also created the Inter-Cabinet Cluster Mechanism on Normalization, which allowed the National Government to support the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) in establishing a government and institutions that would sustain peace in the area. Through these efforts, our brothers and sisters in the Bangsamoro region have regained control of their destiny. I trust that their leaders will usher them to progress. The Philippine Government will continue to support the BTA until a just and inclusive peace in the Bangsamoro is reached. As a testament to my commitment to

169 Refers to Implementing the Annex on Normalization under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, signed April 24, 2019.

promote lasting peace in Mindanao, we supported the normalization process through the following:

Established a Vital Consultation Mechanism between Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and the National Government[170]

Upon the passage and ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law, we realized the need for clear and open communication channels that would foster important development discussions between the National Government and the BARMM. Thus, in October 2019, I approved the establishment of the National Government – Bangsamoro Government Intergovernmental Relations Body (IGRB) with a mandate to sustain cooperation and coordination between and among the agencies of the BARMM and the National Government. The IGRB ensures that all policies and programs of the BARMM are service-oriented, people-centric, and transformative in order to bring tangible benefits to and real change in the lives of the Bangsamoro people.

Training of Joint Peace and Security Teams (JPST)[171]

The JPST is an initiative that aims to form partnerships in peace. It involves the joint training of the AFP, PNP, and MILF-Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) to equip them with knowledge, skills, and attitude to better protect the gains of the peace process.

In August and October 2019, we

Members of the IGRB from the National Government, represented by DOF Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III and the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., and their counterparts from the Bangsamoro government convene IGRB's first consultative meeting on December 16, 2019 in Davao City.
Photo Credit: OPAPP

170 OPAPP, July 18, 2020.
171 OPAPP, July 18, 2020.

The joint training of AFP, PNP, and MILF-BIAF troops reflects the trust, confidence, and camaraderie built among members of the group.
Photo Credit: OPAPP

conducted two batches of JPST training, involving 173 AFP and PNP personnel and 372 MILF-BIAF in Cotabato and Maguindanao provinces.

Decommissioning of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)[172]

Grounded on the CAB principle of inclusivity, we continue to give former MILF combatants and non-combatants an opportunity to reintegrate into society and enjoy fruitful and productive civilian lives.

We completed the second phase of the decommissioning of the MILF-BIAF combatants and weapons on March 11, 2020. A total of 12,000 former MILF combatants and 2,100 weapons were decommissioned.

Each of the decommissioned combatants received from the Philippine Government a socioeconomic package worth PhP1 million. This includes PhP100,000 cash, health benefits, scholarships for their children, housing and livelihood projects, training, and capacity building.

I am grateful for the contributions of the Government of Malaysia as Third-Party Facilitator in the Peace Process and the tireless support of the sixteen-strong International Monitoring Team, whose timely interventions have been instrumental in fortifying our peace negotiations.

Our decades-long yearning for peace in Mindanao is not just a national aspiration, but one that is shared among our friends and partners in the regional and global community. The international support that we have received to advance the Mindanao peace process is a testament to the strength of partnerships which we have fostered through our sustained engagements for peace and security.

The President leads the distribution of socioeconomic assistance to the former MILF combatants during their decommissioning at the Old Provincial Capitol Compound in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao on September 7, 2019. Assisting the President is BARMM Interim Chief Minister Ahod B. Ebrahim.
Photo Credit: PCOO

172 OPAPP, July 18, 2020.

Towards Marawi's Recovery and Rehabilitation

I have not forgotten our Maranao brothers and sisters in Marawi. While the health emergency disrupted our ongoing rehabilitation, we are now moving full speed towards the recovery and rehabilitation of Marawi City.

Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) Chairman and DHSUD Secretary Eduardo D. Del Rosario leads the groundbreaking on the construction of Marawi City Integrated School (left) and the symbolic restoration of power supply inside the war-torn Islamic City's most affected area (right) on July 15-16, 2020.
Photo Credit: DHSUD

National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) Chair Saidamen Balt Pangarungan listens to the issues of Muslim Filipinos during the consultation with Marawi residents on March 18, 2019 in Marawi City.
Photo Credit: NCMF

TESDA Secretary Isidro S. Lapeña and authorities from the Cooperative Development Authority sign an agreement on October 22, 2019 to strengthen the capacity of cooperative members, especially those belonging to indigenous peoples and the internally displaced persons of Marawi.
Photo Credit: TESDA

Upholding Public Safety

I have always prayed for peace not only in Mindanao but for the whole country. This is why since the beginning of my Administration, I have worked hard to ensure that our communities, families, and children are safe from the evils of criminality and illegal drugs.

Combatting Criminality[173]

My commitment to fight crime in the country has never waned. The efforts of our law enforcement agencies continue to pay off, as shown by significant achievements in anti-crime operations.

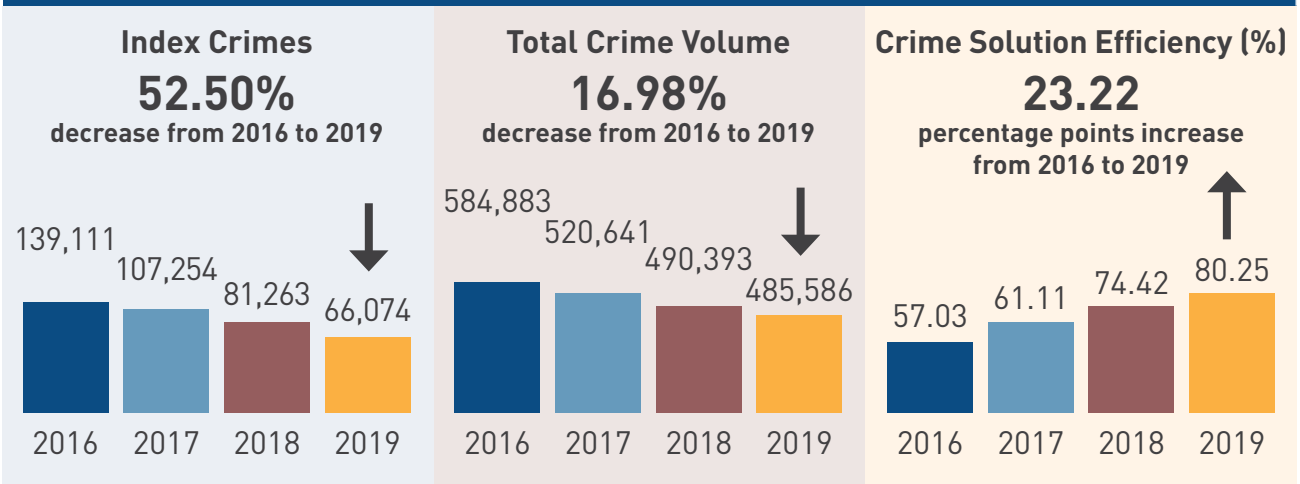
We reduced index crime incidents[174] by more than half (52.50 percent) from 139,111 in 2016 to 66,074 in 2019. In addition, the PNP's efficiency in solving crimes has notably improved from 57.03 percent in 2016 to 80.25 percent in 2019 *(see figure 5.2)*.

Carrying on the Battle Against Illegal Drugs

For the past four years, our campaign against illegal drugs has been relentless. I remain firm in my commitment to significantly reduce, if not put a stop to, the scourge of illegal drugs within my term. I will not let it destroy the lives of my fellow Filipinos, especially the youth.

Sustained anti-illegal drug operations.[175] From July 2016 to June 2020, our law enforcement agencies conducted 170,449 anti-illegal drug operations, resulting in significant accomplishments *(see figure 5.3)*.

Figure 5.2 **Anti-Criminality Accomplishments (2016-2019)**



Source: PNP

173 DILG, July 16, 2020.
174 The eight index crimes are theft, robbery, carnapping of motorcycles, carnapping of motor vehicles, murder, homicide, rape, and physical injury. 2016 to 2018 figures were adjusted in view of the exclusion of cattle rustling under index crimes.
175 PDEA, July 17, 2020.

Figure 5.3 **Results of Anti-illegal Drug Operations (July 2016 to June 2020)**

247,798
arrested illegal drug personalities

3,211
rescued minors

558
dismantled illegal drug dens

PhP52.22 billion
worth of illegal drugs seized

18,893
drug-cleared barangays out of 42,045

Source: PDEA

Conducted high-impact operations. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and other law enforcement agencies conducted high-impact operations and arrested high-value targets to significantly reduce the supply of illegal drugs in the country. The following are some of their noteworthy drug busts:

- On October 17, 2019, authorities seized 87.8 kilograms (kg) of shabu worth PhP597 million during a land interdiction operation in Gandara, Samar. Six drug personalities were arrested.

- 371 kg of shabu worth PhP2.52 billion were seized during a buy-bust operation in Makati City on November 26, 2019. A Chinese national was arrested.

- On February 3, 2020, authorities seized 3.94 kg of shabu worth PhP26.78 million during an interdiction operation through random K9 sweeping and parcel profiling in NAIA Terminal 3, Pasay City. A Thai national was arrested.

- 371.09 kg of shabu worth PhP2.52 billion were seized from two arrested drug suspects in General Trias City, Cavite on June 11, 2020.

Improved Citizen Participation in the Fight Against Illegal Drugs. For the past four years, my Administration has worked towards fostering a partnership between the government and its people in the fight against illegal drugs. It gives me hope when illegal drug activities are thwarted due to reports that came from the people themselves. Our local authorities have seized upon this partnership to help eradicate our country's drug problem.

- A barangay councilor from Bais City, Negros Oriental was arrested on June 7, 2020 due to his neighbor's tip to the authorities. Recovered from the suspect were two grams of shabu worth PhP13,600 and a .45 caliber pistol.

- On June 2, 2020, authorities recovered 50 grams of shabu worth PhP340,000 during a buy-bust operation in Cebu City. The suspect was under surveillance for about a week after he was reported by a concerned citizen.

Sustained Demand and Harm Reduction Efforts.[176] Fully aware that the war on drugs cannot be won by addressing only the supply of drugs, we undertook the following efforts to reduce the demand for illegal drugs:

- *Treatment and Rehabilitation.* From January 2018 to January 2020, the DOH Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers provided 7,625 inpatient services and 10,276 outpatient services, while 7,175 patients had completed the primary care program of the centers.

- *PNP Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP).* In addition to their steadfast efforts in curtailing illegal drug supply, the PNP is also implementing a RWP. It aims to provide a holistic approach, through medical and psychosocial interventions, towards the recovery of illegal drug surrenderers. From July 2016 to June 2020, there were 559,190 graduates of the PNP RWP.

- *Community-based Drug Rehabilitation Program (CBDRP).* A total of 178,353 drug surrenderers nationwide have completed the CBDRP interventions consisting of psychosocial support, recovery skills, psychoeducation, relapse prevention skills, life skills, family intervention, and counseling, among others. The DILG also developed an Anti-Drug Abuse Council reporting system, which will be linked to the information system of the Dangerous Drugs Board, to efficiently monitor the progress of the drug surrenderers based on the interventions provided to them.

- *Balay Silangan.* The PDEA's *Balay Silangan* Reformation Program aims to reform drug offenders and reintegrate them back to society. As of June 30, 2020, 140 *Balay Silangan* Reformation Centers nationwide catered to 2,100 clients. Of these, 1,449 have graduated while 91 have been employed.

176 DOH, July 17, 2020; PNP, July 17, 2020; DILG, July 15, 2020; PDEA, July 17, 2020.

Strengthening the Military and the Police

The President salutes one of the wounded soldiers he visited at the Camp Teodulfo Bautista Station Hospital in Jolo, Sulu on December 14, 2019.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Time and again, the military and the police have proven their commitment to their sworn duty to preserve the country's territorial integrity and safety from various threats, whether these be from insurgency and terrorism, crime, illegal drugs, or calamities. Throughout the pandemic, we have also relied on the military and the police for our COVID-19 management and response, serving at the frontlines along with our medical and health professionals. In recognition of the selfless duty of the military, police, and other law enforcement agencies, my Administration has implemented programs to boost their morale and strengthen their capability so they would be fully equipped to perform their duties.

Uplifting the Morale of our Troops[177]

We recognize the sacrifices of the military and the police by ensuring that their needs are well taken care of.

177 PMS, July 17, 2020.

Comprehensive Social Benefits Program (CSBP). We have been implementing the CSBP since 2017 to provide assistance to and honor our AFP and PNP battle casualties. Benefits include financial, employment and livelihood, education, housing, and healthcare assistance *(see Table 5.1).*

Payment of Pension Differentials. Our appreciation to the armed forces is not limited to those who are in active service. We also honor the sacrifices of our retired military and uniformed personnel (MUP). In October 2019, the DBM released PhP22.3 billion to the DND, DILG, National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to cover the pension differentials of retired MUP from June to December 2019.

Table 5.1 **CSBP Assistance to AFP and PNP Beneficiaries (as of June 2020)**

Type of Assistance	AFP Beneficiaries	PNP Beneficiaries
Special Financial Assistance	3,624	702
Employment and Livelihood	320	125
Education	419	49
Housing	425	163
Healthcare	351	152

Source: PMS

Hyperbaric Chamber installed at the Camp Navarro General Hospital
Photo Credit: Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority

Provision of Hazard Duty Pay to Military Personnel assigned in Sulu. I recognize the magnitude of the danger our troops face in Sulu. Thus, we provided them with hazard duty pay equivalent to 50 percent of their base pay.

Upgrading of Military and Police Hospitals. Part of my commitment to the troops is the upgrading of military and police hospitals to ensure that they, especially our battle casualties, would have access to quality treatment. As of June 2020, we have provided a hyperbaric chamber for Camp Navarro General Hospital and a magnetic resonance imaging machine for the AFP Medical Center.

Meanwhile, we are implementing the construction of new buildings

for the AFP Medical Center and PNP Medical Plaza, and the repair of the AFP Medical Center and PSG Station Hospital buildings.

Upgrading the Capability of our Forces[178]

To lessen the risks to our law enforcers and troops and further enhance their efficiency and effectiveness in protecting the country, I have ensured the funding for their modernization and capability enhancement programs.

Equipping the Police. Through the Capability Enhancement Program, we have been procuring more equipment to support the PNP's operations. As of June 30, 2020, we have issued various equipment such as vehicles, communication equipment, and firearms to police offices nationwide. Other items, such as ballistic eyewear and body worn cameras, are in various stages of procurement.

Sustaining Efforts to Modernize the Military. Over the past four years, we ensured that the capabilities of the AFP are responsive to the growing demands for a stronger military force. We continue to pursue the remaining projects under the Horizon One of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program (RAFPMP). In 2018, we started the implementation of the Second Horizon of the RAFPMP. This program aims to provide the equipment necessary for the AFP to perform its mandates on internal security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and territorial defense, especially of our maritime domain.

A notable achievement under the AFP Modernization Program is the delivery of the BRP Jose Rizal, classified as our first missile-capable warship, on May 23, 2020. The commissioning of BRP Jose Rizal on July 10, 2020 and the upcoming similar class warship slated for delivery next year, the BRP Antonio Luna, signal the start of more advanced naval and maritime operations.

BRP Jose Rizal arrives at Alava Wharf, Subic Bay, Zambales on May 23, 2020.
Photo Credit: PN

178 PNP, July 17, 2020; DND, July 17, 2020.

Fostering International Partnerships for Peace, Security, and Development

The President prepares to deliver his speech during the 16th Annual Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club in Sochi, Russia on October 3, 2019. (From L to R: His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and a moderator from the Russian Academy of Sciences.
Photo Credit: PCOO

For years, we have let our colonized history define the entirety of our foreign policy. This has caused a cycle of dependence and allowed inequality in our relationship with other countries. Thus, as the leader of this nation, I made a commitment to rectify these errors and pursue a truly independent foreign policy that best represents the interest and values of the Filipino people.

The Philippines is a friend to all and enemy to none. The partnerships we fostered in the past few years have erected new bridges that connected the Philippines to the rest of the world. At the same time, we remain committed to our existing partnerships and faithful to our agreements with them.

Reinforcing ASEAN Community and Regional Security[179]

Enhanced security relations with Southeast Asian neighbors. Together with our closest neighbors, we responded to transnational security

179 DND, July 17, 2020; DFA, April 9, 2020.

challenges in the Sulu-Sulawesi seas through the Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement on Immediate Measures to Address Security Issues in the Maritime Areas of Common Concern, which was signed on July 14, 2016. We conducted trilateral air patrols, five of which were led by the AFP in 2019, and trilateral port visits, one of which was hosted by the AFP in Zamboanga City. These trilateral patrols, combined with heightened efforts in information sharing, have contributed to safer waters in the tri-border maritime areas. As a result, the kidnapping activities of the ASG have significantly decreased from 16 in 2016 to two in 2019.

Promoted stability in the South China Sea (SCS). We were actively involved, as the ASEAN-China coordinator, in developing the draft framework for the SCS Code of Conduct (COC), which was adopted during our ASEAN Chairmanship in 2017. The draft framework serves as basis for the negotiations between China and the ASEAN Member States on the actual COC. In 2019, we facilitated several meetings towards the completion of the first reading of the single draft negotiating text.

Participated Actively in Fighting COVID-19 as one ASEAN. True to the motto of ASEAN: "One Vision, One Identity, One Community", the ASEAN Member States remained united in its strong determination and unwavering commitment to act jointly and decisively to protect its peoples amidst the global pandemic.

The President participates in the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 held via teleconference at the Malago Clubhouse on April 4, 2020.
Photo Credit: PCOO

On April 14, 2020, I represented the Filipino Nation in the Special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19. During the meeting, we advocated the incorporation of the following in the ASEAN Framework: (1) ASEAN cooperation to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19, (2) updating and improving existing ASEAN mechanisms for Infectious Disease Outbreaks, and (3) active engagement with ASEAN Dialogue Partners on vaccine research and development.

Southeast Asia (SEA) Games: A Source of National Pride

The Philippines was very honored to host the 30th SEA Games conducted from November 30 to December 11, 2019.

The sports competitions were conducted simultaneously in various venues such as the New Clark City Sports Hub; Rizal Memorial Sports Complex; and several locations in Cavite, Laguna, Zambales, and Batangas.

The activity served as an opportunity for thousands of athletes from SEA countries to demonstrate their talents, professionalism, and camaraderie. Indeed, our athletes are a testimony that Filipinos can compete in the international arena.

Our hosting of the SEA Games has shown to the world that our country is ready and capable to cater and manage international events. The feat was achieved through the collective effort of different agencies, and the enthusiastic support of the Filipino people, marking the event a historic success.

Photo Credit: PCOO, PIA, and 2019 SEA Games website

Fostering Closer Ties with East Asian Neighbors[180]

Levelled-up Cooperation with Japan. Under my term, Philippine-Japan relations entered a more strategic phase of cooperation. The numerous agreements we signed since 2017 provide the framework of cooperation both in defense and infrastructure.

Our warm friendship with Japan also resulted in generous donations that further strengthened our defense capabilities. In 2018, five Beechcraft King Air TC-90 aircraft were given for free by the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force to the Philippine Navy (PN) despite initial agreement of leasing the aircrafts. Japan also donated thousands of spare parts and maintenance equipment for the UH-1 Huey helicopters of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) in 2019, making the Philippines the first ASEAN member-state to receive excess Japanese defense equipment. The first Philippines-Japan Defense Industry Forum, which promoted defense equipment cooperation between both countries, was held in Taguig City on October 2, 2019.

The President and Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe shake hands prior to the start of their bilateral meeting in Nonthaburi, Thailand. Standing behind President Duterte are members of the Philippine delegation.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Enhanced Defense Cooperation with South Korea. South Korea has always been a reliable partner in modernizing the AFP. In 2018, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Cooperation on the Expansion of Renewable Energy Deployment between the DND and the Republic of Korea Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy. This aims to strengthen the DND's renewable energy supply to maintain its operational readiness, particularly in times of emergency. In July 2019, we received a unit of Pohang Class Corvette Chungju, which we named BRP Conrado Yap. The vessel is expected to enhance the PN's capabilities in defending our seas and responding to different maritime security threats. Given our robust defense cooperation with South Korea, we signed another MOU in November 2019 to fast-track our procurement of defense equipment.

180 DND, July 17, 2020.

Revitalized Defense Cooperation with China. We have taken steps to develop existing defense relations with China, particularly in the field of logistics and defense by signing formal agreements in 2017. Military aid gratis from China were transferred to the Philippines to include offshore patrol boats, multipurpose machine guns, ammunition, and rifles, among others.

Pursued Defense Agreements with Non-traditional Security Partners. Our enhanced ties with Russia throughout the years resulted in the signing of 19 agreements in various areas of cooperation, such as agriculture, trade, transportation, defense, security, and energy.

In 2018, Russia also donated the following to the AFP: 20 units of general utility trucks; 5,000 units of 7.62-millimeter (mm) AK assault rifles with 30-rounds of magazines; 1,000,000 units of 7.62-mm ammunition; and 5,000 units of assault ballistic helmets.

From October 1 to 5, 2019, I visited Russia upon the invitation of President Vladimir Putin. I also participated in the 16th Annual Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club to share my vision for the Philippines' independent foreign policy. The visit resulted in fruitful agreements that further intensified cooperation not only in areas of security and defense, but also in trade, culture, and education.

The President and the members of the Philippine delegation hold a bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Russian delegation in Sochi, Russia on October 3, 2019. Philippine delegation (from back to front): Senator Go, DOE Secretary Cusi, DTI Secretary Lopez, DND Secretary Delfin N. Lorenzana, Executive Secretary Salvador C. Medialdea, and DOF Secretary Dominguez.
Photo Credit: PCOO

We have also pursued defense cooperation and fostered relationships with non-traditional partners such as Israel and Jordan.

For Israel, we completed our implementing arrangements for projects such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), 155-mm self-propelled Howitzer, M113 armored personnel carrier upgrade, and light tanks for the Philippine Army; UAVs and ground-based air defense system for the PAF; multi-purpose assault craft-missile for the PN; and radar drone monitoring for the Presidential Security Group.

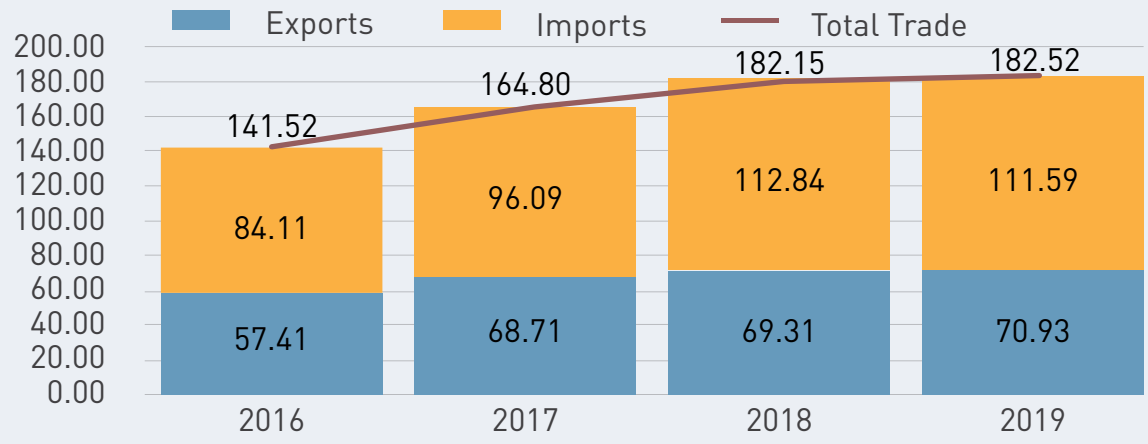
In 2019, Jordan donated Cobra helicopters, 60-mm mortars, modified M14 rifles, AK-47, RPG 7 launchers, and RPG 7 ammunition.

Sustaining International Cooperation Towards Economic Development[181]

We continued to pursue an array of economic and fiscal strategies to ensure that the economy can weather external shocks. To this end, we sustained existing trade relations with our traditional partners and aggressively built relationships with non-traditional partners to improve trade.

Increased trade. During my diplomatic visits and bilateral engagements with our partners, I have continuously pushed for closer economic cooperation to create more viable opportunities in trade and investments. As a result, we sustained improvements in total trade *(see Figure 5.4)*. Our top trading partners in the same year were China, Japan, US,

Figure 5.4 **Total Trade (2016-2019) (in US$ Billion)**



Source: PSA, as processed in Tradeline Philippines
Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

181 DTI, July 16, 2020.

Hong Kong, and South Korea *(see Table 5.2)*.

I want our people to enjoy and maximize these opportunities as we sustain our efforts to establish a more reliable and conducive business environment.

In the past four years, we also signed several trade mechanisms that have yielded benefits to our local industries:

China. The Six-Year Development Program for Economic and Trade Development (2017-2022), signed in March 2017, paved the way for increased bilateral trade, improved market access for agricultural products, and empowered MSMEs, among others.

The Belt and Road Initiative, signed in November 2018, enabled cooperation in political, economic, financial, and sociocultural areas, among others.

Vietnam. In April 2017, both countries agreed on initiatives to improve trade and investment, and schemes to capitalize on the complementarities of our countries in developing certain industries and sectors.

Vietnam has remained committed to ensuring supply of rice to meet Philippine demand through its participation in Philippine tenders, especially in the time of COVID-19.

Table 5.2 **Top Trading Partners (2019)**

Country	Total Trade in US$ Billion	Share to Total Trade (in %)
China	35.31	19.35
Japan	21.25	11.65
US	19.64	10.76
Hong Kong	13.22	7.24
South Korea	11.72	6.42

As part of a broad commitment to ASEAN, tariff rate quota for eggs and salt were eliminated in May 2018, while rates for sugar were eliminated in January 2020.

Russia. 19 agreements in trade and investment promotion, industry cooperation, and agriculture were signed in Russia in May 2017.

Philippine fishery products have been allowed entry into the Russian market since December 2018. In 2019, three MOUs were signed between Philippine tuna producers and their Russian counterparts. This facilitated greater business opportunities for the country's US$400-million tuna industry and jobs in Mindanao, where 90 percent of Philippine tuna is produced.

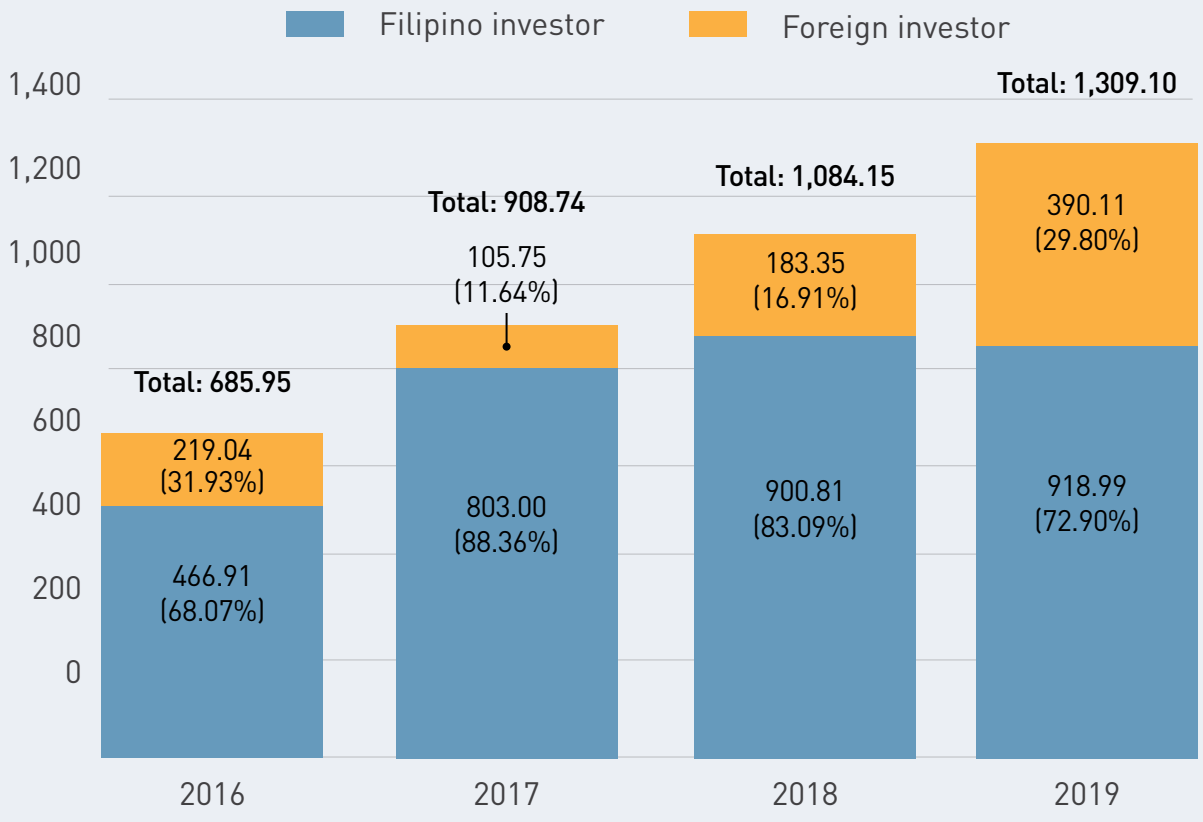
The first shipment of Philippine coconut milk to Russia arrived in April 2020.

Enhanced investor confidence. To support our development goals, we promoted the ease of doing business. The record-high investment approvals since 2017 *(see Figure 5.5)* indicates the strong investor confidence that we have regained through our reform agenda, particularly in improving business processes and addressing corruption by strengthening transparency in the government and streamlining government procedures and transactions.

Of the PhP1.3 trillion foreign investments approved in 2019, 29.80 percent or PhP390.11 billion came from foreign investors. Among our top foreign investors were Singapore, China, South Korea, Japan, and the Netherlands.

With stronger trade relations and investment confidence, the country was better positioned to cope with the challenges that the year has brought us.

Figure 5.5 **IPA-Approved Investment, 2016-2019 (in PhP billion)**



Source: DTI
Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Way Forward: Soldiering on Towards the Path of Peace, Security, and Development

The Filipino people have entrusted me with the duty of looking after the nation. As security is central to our survival as a nation, our development goals can only be realized if every Filipino is free from fear. Our path towards a comfortable life for all will be paved by our relentless and unwavering dedication to secure our communities and pursue lasting and meaningful peace.

In the remaining years of my term, we will continue to fuel the momentum of the peace process by supporting the BTA in transitioning to an autonomous government. We will also aggressively pursue the harmonization of our security and development interventions on the ground, with greater and deeper participation of local government units to end the local communist armed conflict and facilitate regional development and growth.

We have laid down the foundation for local peace. However, to end insurgency and usher in meaningful development across the country, we need the local government to seize and preserve the gains we have achieved.

In our whole-of-nation approach to peace, the local government serves as a formidable partner in security and development. As for the national government, we will focus on pursuing economic recovery, sustainable development, and regional growth that would benefit all Filipinos.

The President leads the commemoration of the 156th birth anniversary of Andres Bonifacio at the Bonifacio Monument in Caloocan City on November 30, 2019.
Photo Credit: PCOO

TOWARDS A BETTER NORMAL FOR ALL

- Adapting to the New Normal
- Dispersing Economic Activities for a Balanced Regional Development
- Ensuring the Filipino's Well-being and Resiliency

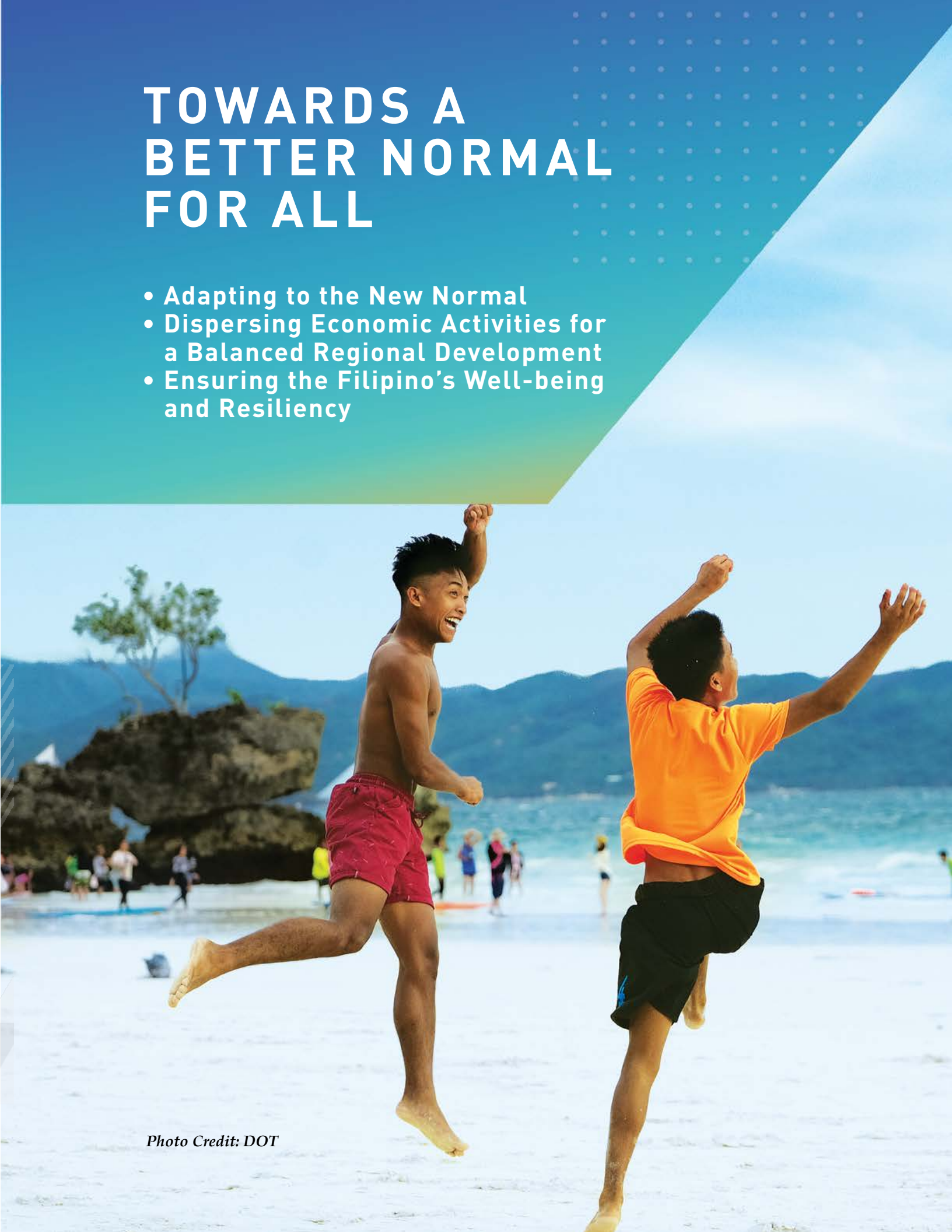


Photo Credit: DOT

"This is not a warning, but rather an appeal, that you should get used to the way of life we have now. It has changed. We walk, we practice social distancing, we wash hands, we wear masks. And if possible, limit your trips outside the house."

The President's statement, Talk to the People on COVID-19, June 22, 2020

Photo Credit: PCOO

Chapter 6

Adapting to the New Normal

We need to come to terms with the fact that COVID-19 has changed our lives in ways that we never imagined. It has brought us new challenges, with which all nations, rich or poor, are now struggling to cope. We are entering a period of new normal, and the way we lived a few months ago, now seems a distant memory.

We entered 2020 with a strong growth prospect. We had a strong fiscal position, falling debt-to-GDP ratio, and lowest unemployment, underemployment, and poverty rates. However, the community quarantines imposed to contain the virus caused a decline in economic activities, thereby putting a halt to our economic gains thus far.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has unprecedented effects on our daily lives, lockdowns and mobility restrictions cannot persist while waiting for a vaccine. Likewise, even

after the health emergency is dealt with, we will continue to contend with recession, unemployment, budget deficits, corporate bailouts, food scarcity, poverty, and a host of other socio-economic issues that must be addressed.

Furthermore, while I have always emphasized the need to uphold the primacy of life of the Filipino people, not opening up the economy can lead to permanent damage to livelihood, economic growth, and eventually human development. Thus, the need to reopen the economy under the new normal. The latter, which is characterized by a significant change in the immediately preceding situation, like observing physical distancing, strict personal hygiene, and other health protocols. It has far-reaching implications on different dimensions. As such, until a vaccine is developed and the disease is fully eradicated, we cannot, and should not, go back to our old ways.

For instance, in many service-oriented organizations in the private and public sector, flexible work arrangements (e.g., skeleton workforce, work-from-home, and compressed workweek) will have to be implemented to avoid the spread of the virus. Workspaces will also need to be reconfigured to address the need for physical distancing.

In the transport sector, reduced load factor accompanied by stringent sanitary protocols in all modes of public transportation will be part of the new normal.

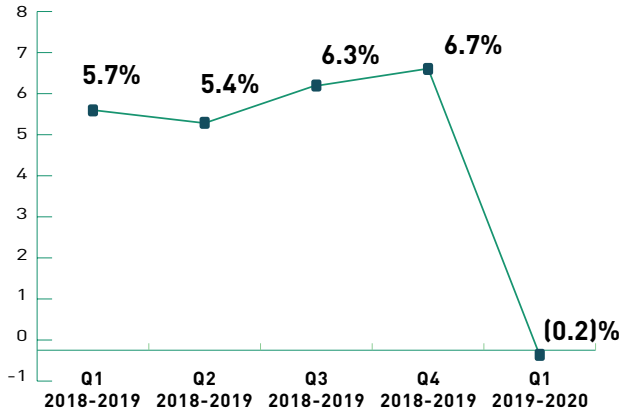
With companies, schools, and government agencies implementing work-from-home arrangements, the use of digital technology will increase significantly. In addition, business transactions such as online retail, online banking, online medical consultations, and digital payments will increasingly become a necessity. All these need to be supported by a reliable digital infrastructure with strong cybersecurity protection.

While the global pandemic has exposed the gaps in our existing systems, it also offered unique opportunities for us to recover to a "better normal." In the interim, individual and institutional changes that adapt to the new normal are necessary to enable us to overcome this pandemic as a nation.

Talk to the People on COVID-19, June 15, 2020
Photo Credit: PCOO

Rebooting the Economy

Figure 6.1 **Gross Domestic Product Year-On-Year Growth Rates (2019 to Q1 2020)**



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority

Aside from health, our economy also bore the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic.[182]

In 2019, the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio since 1986 was recorded at 39.6 percent; the highest revenue effort since 1997 realized at 16.1 percent of GDP; the highest credit rating in the country's history achieved at BBB+ from Standard and Poor's; and the lowest rates of unemployment recorded at 5.3 percent, underemployment at 14.8 percent, and poverty at 16.7 percent.

However, as we entered the year 2020, we faced the Taal Volcano eruption in January, immediately followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which compelled the imposition of community quarantines to contain the spread of the virus. This caused a decline in most of our economic activities, especially tourism and manufacturing. Consequently, the country's GDP declined by 0.2 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2020 *(see Figure 6.1)*, the first contraction since the fourth quarter of 1998, when the country was reeling from the effects of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis.

Global disruptions, together with the travel restrictions, deterioration in business and consumer confidence, and the imposition of community quarantines, are estimated to reduce domestic economic growth to anywhere between -2.0 to -3.4 percent in 2020. Reduced revenues and higher spending due to the crisis are likewise expected to raise the budget deficit to at least eight percent of GDP this year with a gradual consolidation in the medium-term. In addition, the World Trade Organization estimates that world merchandise trade would fall between 13 percent and 32 percent in 2020 alone.

Acting NEDA Secretary Karl Kendrick T. Chua speaks during the First Quarter 2020 National Accounts Press Conference on May 7, 2020.
Photo Credit: Karl Kendrick Chua Official Facebook Page

182 NEDA, July 17, 2020.

Nonetheless, I am optimistic of the ability of our nation and economy to recover. In April 2020, *The Economist* ranked the Philippines' financial strength 6th among 66 emerging economies, and the best among those ranked in Asia in terms of economic, fiscal, and financial management.

Furthermore, on July 16, 2020, Moody's Investors Service affirmed our country's "Baa2" investment grade rating with a "stable" economic outlook. In addition, the Japan Credit Rating Agency upgraded our rating from BBB plus to A minus. These ratings, along with the stable outlook, recognize our country's economic resiliency amidst the pandemic.

Philippine Program for Recovery with Equity and Solidarity (PH-Progreso)

As we restart the economy after the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government will work tirelessly in pursuit of our country's recovery. My Economic Team crafted a framework called the Philippine Program for Recovery with Equity and Solidarity (PH-Progreso), which aims to rebound our economy to the pre-crisis average real GDP growth of 6.6 percent *(see Table 6.1)*.[183]

As of May 19, 2020, we have so far programmed PhP1.74 trillion under the PH-Progreso. This includes the

Table 6.1 **Stages and Key Features of PH-Progreso**

	EMERGENCY STAGE	RECOVERY STAGE	RESILIENCY STAGE
Period	March to May 2020	June to December 2020	2021 onwards
Proposed or Issued Measures	*Bayanihan I*	*Bayanihan II*, Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE)	2021 and 2022 GAAs and other reform laws
Key Features	• Budget and procurement flexibility • Subsidy to poor and low-income households • Support for small businesses • Support to key sectors (e.g., agriculture and OFWs) • Health system, capacity, and insurance • Support to frontliners	• Budget and procurement flexibility • Better targeted and implemented *Bayanihan* programs to raise income and create jobs • Reprioritization of 2020 budget • Resumption of *Build, Build, Build* Program priorities • Liquidity and equity infusion, and guarantee through the financial sector to support firms • Targeted tax incentives	• 2021 and 2022 budgets attuned to actual needs • Structural reforms to prepare for the new normal, including enhancing resiliency to disasters and pandemics • Support *Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa* Program (decongestion of major urban centers, balanced and resilient regional development)

Source: NEDA

183 Average for 2016 to 2019. (2016 – 7.1 percent, 2017 – 6.9 percent, 2018 – 6.4 percent, and 2019 – 6.0 percent).

PhP595.62 billion for emergency support to vulnerable groups, PhP58.63 billion for resources to fight COVID-19, and PhP1.09 trillion for fiscal and monetary actions.

However, we cannot execute all our plans under the PH-Progreso without the support of Congress. As such, we are calling on our legislators to facilitate the passage of the *Bayanihan* II, which is aimed at stimulating private consumption to create jobs and restore income levels, and provide liquidity to firms. We are also requesting Congress to fast-track the enactment of the CREATE Act, which aims to cut the corporate income tax rate from the current 30 percent to 25 percent, among others.

Moreover, we will prioritize health, infrastructure, agriculture, food value

Table 6.2 **Some of the Proposed Reform Measures**

Title	Purpose
Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or *Bayanihan II*	• Supplement the *Bayanihan* to Heal as One Act, which expired on June 25, 2020 • Include a PhP140-billion funding to support response measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic
Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act *(previously referred to as Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Reform Act)*	• Cut the corporate income levy from the current 30 percent to 25 percent starting July 2020 • Extend net operating loss carryover to all non-large taxpayers of up to five years from the current three years • Provide a sunset provision of up to nine years for registered business activities enjoying the five percent gross income earned incentive • Afford more flexibility for the government to grant a combination of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives
Rural Agricultural and Fisheries Development Financing System Act	• Remove the distinction between agrarian and agriculture to free up more capital for agriculture and enhance the access of rural communities to private sector financing
Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer (FIST) Act	• Set mechanisms to allow banks and other financial institutions to dispose of non-performing loans and assets, and transfer such loans and assets to FIST Corporations similar to Special Purpose Vehicles
Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery Act	• Provide financial assistance and access to distressed enterprises, including micro, small, and medium enterprises, and strategically important companies critical to economic recovery • Allow the creation of a special holding company to assist strategically important companies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic

Sources: NEDA and DOF

chain, digitization of government process, and other new normal priorities in the 2021 General Appropriations Act to ensure that the recovery stage is adequately supported.

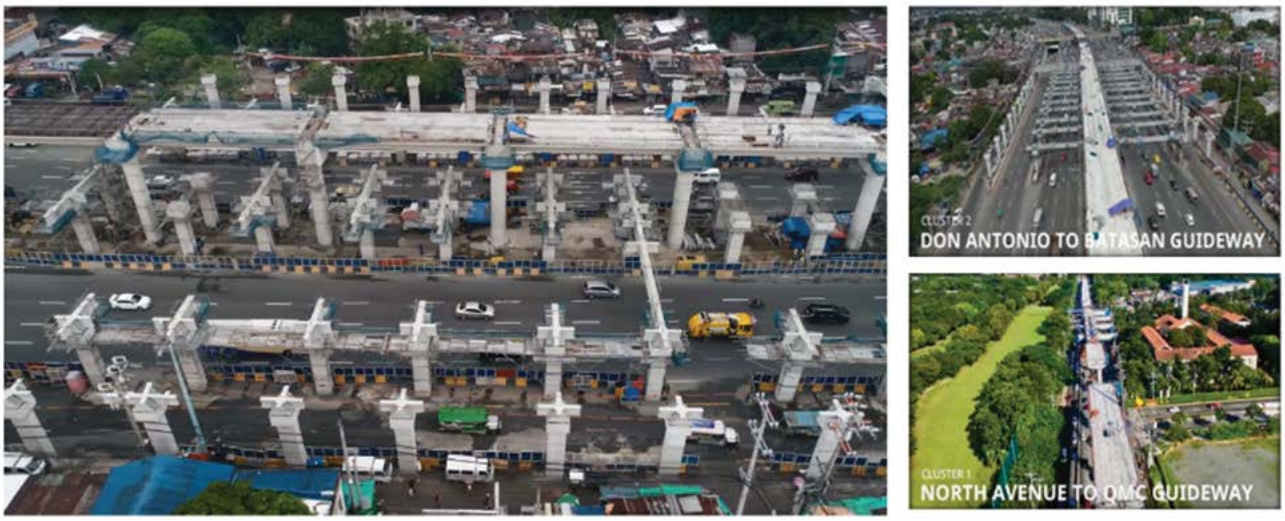
We are also pursuing measures to strengthen our economy and boost the performance and financial standing of our industries. To support this, we endorsed to Congress the passage of various measures *(see Table 6.2)*.

Resumption of the *Build, Build, Build* Program[184]

In June 2020, we transitioned from the Emergency to the Recovery Phase, which aims to boost consumer demand by restoring people's income and jobs. One of the major initiatives to achieve this is to restart the *Build, Build, Build* Program. Upon my approval, the IATF-MEID allowed the gradual resumption of all key infrastructure projects under the *Build, Build, Build* Program, but with a strong reminder to follow strict safety guidelines to avoid infection in project sites. In furtherance thereof, the DPWH issued Department Order no. 39, series of 2020, which calls for the implementation of minimum health standards in construction sites.

To jump-start and revitalize the economy, the government's priority infrastructure projects have resumed construction. These include the NLEX-SLEX Connector Road, Metro Manila Skyway Stage 3, Central Luzon Link Expressway, Clark International Airport's New Passenger Terminal Building, LRT-1 Cavite Extension, LRT-2 East Extension, MRT-7, the Metro Manila Subway Project, and PNR Clark Phase 1 to name a few.

You have our assurance that while timelines may have to be adjusted, we



The MRT-7 involves the construction of a 22-km line that will connect North Avenue in Quezon City to the City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan. It will reduce travel time between North Avenue, Quezon City and City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan from 2 to 3 hours to 35 minutes. *Photo Credit: DOTr*

184 DPWH, July 15, 2020; and DOTr, July 16, 2020. .

shall endeavor to get the *Build, Build, Build* Program back on track.

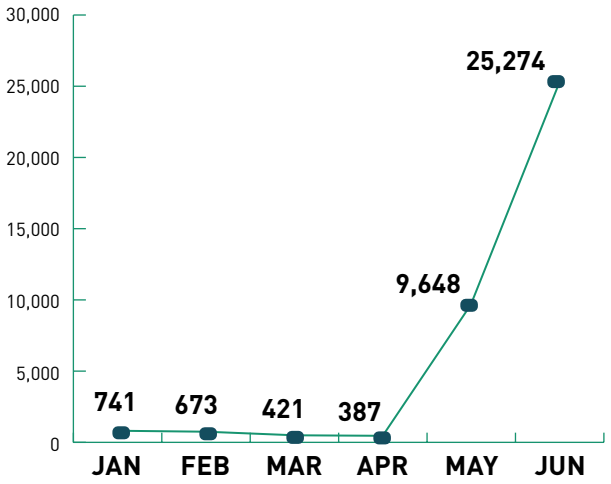
Upswing of the Internet Economy[185]

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns we implemented to contain it have heavily affected businesses. Unsurprisingly, many of them have yet to recover as sales revenues have continued to hover below 30 to 40 percent as compared to pre-pandemic revenues.

On the brighter side, reduced mobility became an inflection point for our internet economy, particularly eCommerce. It has given our retailers, most of whom were MSMEs, the opportunity to rethink their business strategies and adopt online platforms to continue their operations even during this pandemic. With limited mobility most likely to be imposed until the eradication of the virus, we foresee a boom in the internet economy as online purchases become part of the new normal.

The increase in the number of business entities in retail sale online registered during the community quarantine support this. The DTI reported that prior to the declaration of the state of national emergency or from January to March 15, 2020, only 1,740 online businesses registered their business names with the DTI. However, from March 16, 2020 until June 2020, there was a surge in business name registration. In June 2020 alone, business name registration of online businesses reached 25,274 *(see Figure 6.2).*

Figure 6.2 **Business Name Registration of Businesses Involved in Retail Sale via Internet (January to June 2020)**



Source: DTI

Given the changing needs of Filipinos under the new normal, we are helping businesses, especially MSMEs, to adopt technological innovations to improve their operations, and thus boost their productivity and competitiveness. For instance, the DOST's Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SETUP) funded 253 new projects, releasing PhP278.33 million innovation enabling fund (iFund) from April 1 to June 30, 2020.

Furthermore, in coordination with the DTI, MSMEs are being assisted to go into digitalization through the launching of various online platforms such as the oneStore (for eCommerce), oneExpert (for consultancy services), and oneLab (for laboratory testing). Around 80 webinars were conducted

185 DTI, July 16, 2020.

to help MSMEs cope with the new normal, which were attended by more than 8,000 MSMEs.

In addition, to support MSMEs amidst the pandemic and help them transition to the new normal, the DTI has partnered with several online platforms like Lazada and Shopee. The DTI also conducted intensive mentoring and coaching through its Kapatid Mentor Me (KMME) Program.

To pump prime the recovery and rehabilitation of MSMEs, the DTI, through the Small Business Corporation, set up the PhP1 billion COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises (CARES) Program under the P3 to provide microfinancing for MSMEs. As of July 16, 2020, 3,711 loan applications worth PhP253.5 million have been approved.

"During the lockdown period, I was very grateful to have been selected as one of the KMME online mentees nationwide. Through this program, our sales increased by almost 300% by using the knowledge I learned during the modules. This program brings us closer towards making our entrepreneurial dreams a reality."

Ryan Candichoy
PC Extreme Computer Trading

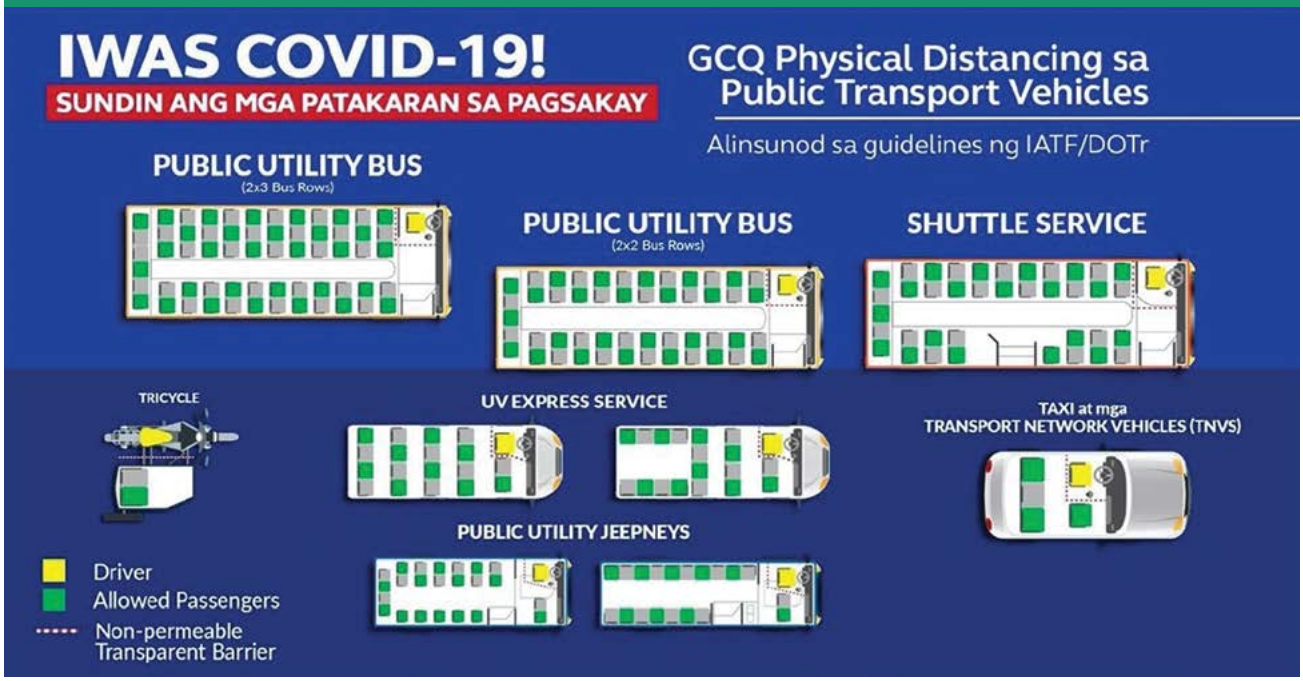
To fortify the eCommerce industry, the DTI is updating our eCommerce Philippines 2022 Roadmap with a strategy that focuses on security, speed, and structure. We are also calling on Congress to revisit the eCommerce Act of 2000.

As conducting business through the internet is fast becoming the "New Economy," online transactions ought to be made safe for the protection of the consuming public. In this regard, my Economic Managers have endorsed various bills to strengthen eCommerce, particularly House Bill no. 6122 or the "Internet Transactions Act." The proposed bill seeks to establish an eCommerce Bureau that will focus on promoting the development of eCommerce in the country by strengthening online consumer protection, and promoting safer e-payment gateways, among others.

With eCommerce growing and evolving, we need to untangle structural and legal impediments to eCommerce and digital marketplace growth. There is also a need to improve logistics performance and reduce logistics cost in the country.

Reforming the Transportation Sector

Figure 6.3 **Physical Distancing in PUVs**



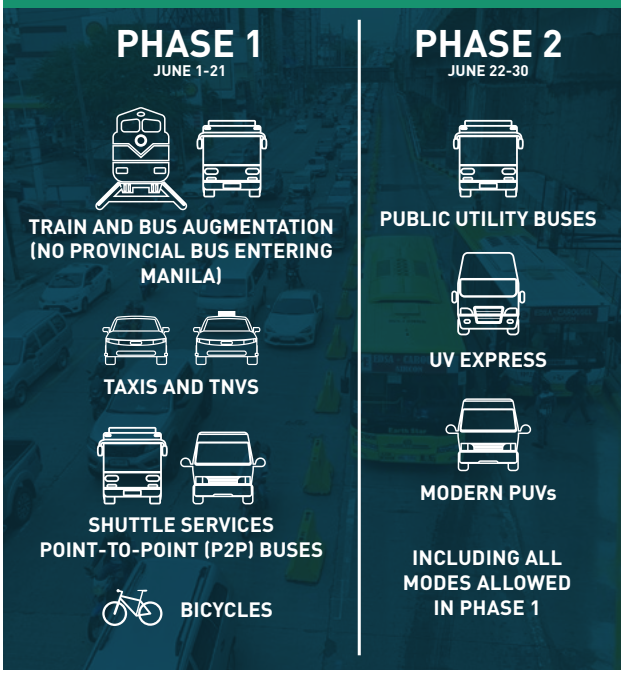
Source: DOTr

The gradual reopening of our economy calls for safe, seamless, and reliable transportation for people and goods. To pave the way for this transition, we started institutionalizing several reforms and adopted an updated Public Transport Guidelines and Protocols for road, rail, maritime, and air transportation.[186]

Road Transport

To balance the need to protect public health and provide mobility, we implemented a gradual and calibrated approach in allowing the operation of different modes of public transportation *(see Figure 6.4).*

Figure 6.4 **Gradual Opening of Public Transportation in Areas under GCQ**



Source: DOTr

186 DOTr, July 16, 17, 19, and 20, 2020.

While the plan was to allow Public Utility Buses to operate after the implementation of Phase 1, we saw as early as June 1, 2020 that with the reduced capacity of our public transportation, we needed to immediately rationalize the bus routes in Metro Manila for a more effective traffic management.

Thus, on June 24, 2020, we finished the rationalization of the bus routes from 96 to 31. These 31 routes stretched from north to south covering Angat, Bulacan to Biñan, Laguna, as well as from southwest to east covering Cavite to Rizal.

We undertook the operationalization of the modern Public Utility Jeepneys (PUJs) in phases in keeping with our calibrated response to restore mass transportation in Metro Manila and adjacent provinces. As of June 26, 2020, more than 600 modern PUJs were given the green light to ply 34 routes.

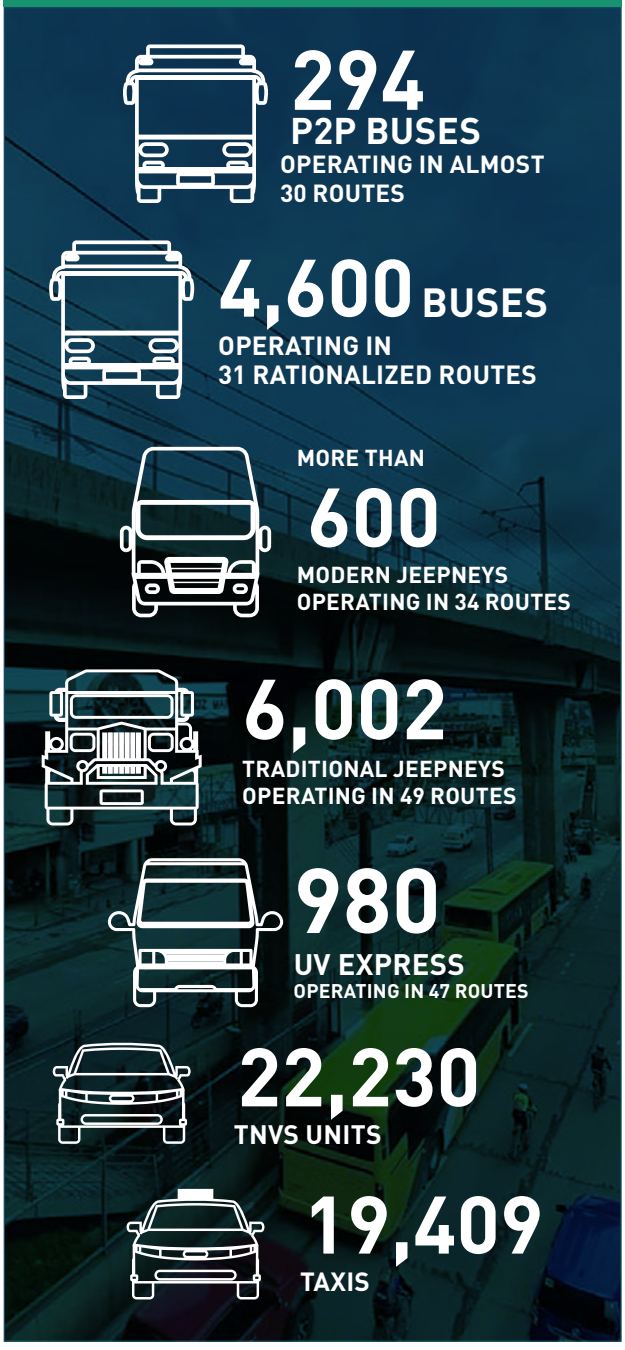
We also allowed 980 UV express vehicles plying in 47 routes in Metro Manila and nearby provinces to operate starting June 29, 2020. Furthermore, after a thorough study and consultation, on July 3, 2020, we allowed 6,002 traditional jeepneys to operate in 49 routes within Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

As of July 5, 2020, we have allowed the operation of more than 54,000 vehicles to ply their routes in Metro Manila and nearby provinces *(see Figure 6.5).*

To help our commuters adjust to the changes in the transportation sector, the DOTr has ordered the suspension of fare increase in all public modes of transportation.

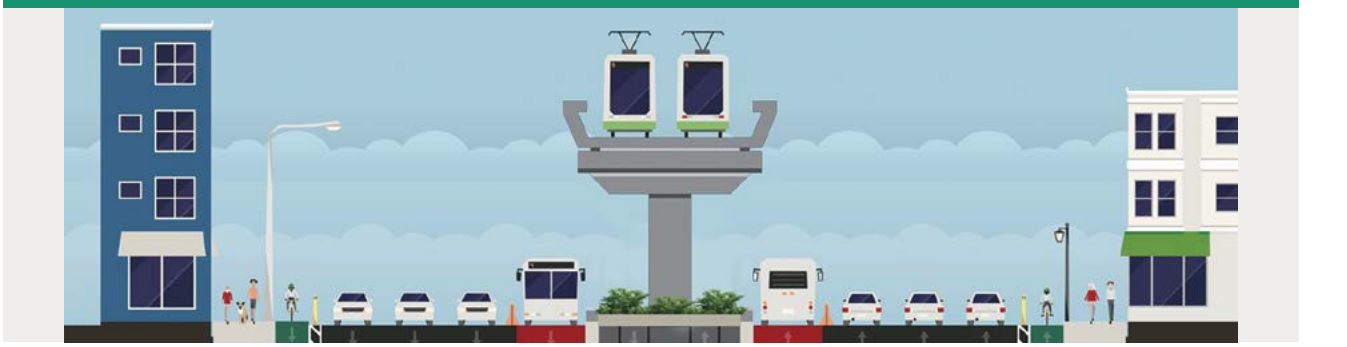
Alongside these interventions, we are encouraging public and private organizations to provide shuttle services for their employees to help protect them from contracting the virus.

Figure 6.5 **Public Transport Allowed to Operate as of July 5, 2020**



Source: DOTr

Figure 6.6 Transformation of EDSA Design Approach



Source: DOTr

We have likewise started the transformation of Metro Manila's main thoroughfare from being polluted, noisy, and congested into a "new EDSA," which prioritizes the mobility and safety of our people over cars *(see Figure 6.6)*.

In particular, we are establishing dedicated bus lanes or busways along EDSA to help ensure faster travel, improve the reliability of bus services, attain efficient use of road space, and more importantly, guarantee the safety of bus drivers, operators, and passengers. The interim operations of the EDSA Busway began on July 1, 2020.

Covering bus stops from Monumento to Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange, the EDSA Busway has significantly cut travel time between these two areas from an average of two to three hours, to one hour and 20 minutes.

Soon, we will see more structures complementing the busways such as loading and unloading stations, pedestrian overpass or at-grade crossings for commuters, lifts to provide access to persons with disabilities, and bicycle lanes. We are targeting to finish the installation of the bicycle lane separators along EDSA within the third quarter of 2020.

We are also harnessing the advantages of technology in road-based transport to minimize physical contact or face-to-face interaction *(see Figure 6.7)*.

Figure 6.7 Key Modernization Initiatives in the Transport Sector

The PTOPS and LTMS are presently implemented in selected areas in the country.
Source: DOTr

In addition, we are ensuring that safety nets are institutionalized to help our transportation sector adapt to these reforms. One of which is the support to PUV operators in procuring their vehicles under the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP).

Considering the economic factors that contributed to the increase in the price of modernized PUV units from PhP1.6 million to PhP2.4 million, we doubled the equity subsidy from PhP80,000 to PhP160,000 for existing PUV operators with valid franchises and those applying for new and developmental routes under the PUVMP. The increase of the equity subsidy is retroactive, thereby covering loans since 2018.

Rail Transport

On June 1, 2020, we allowed the LRT-1, LRT-2, MRT-3, and PNR to resume operations but with limited capacity and subject to health and safety protocols *(see Figure 6.8)*.

We also implemented the MRT-3 Bus Augmentation Program to bridge the gap in MRT-3 capacity due to the implementation of one-meter physical distance inside trains with a fixed schedule of dispatchment. From June 1, 2020 to July 15, 2020, the MRT-3 Bus Augmentation Program has served almost 252,800 passengers, with 17,734 trips made by a maximum of 90 bus units deployed daily.

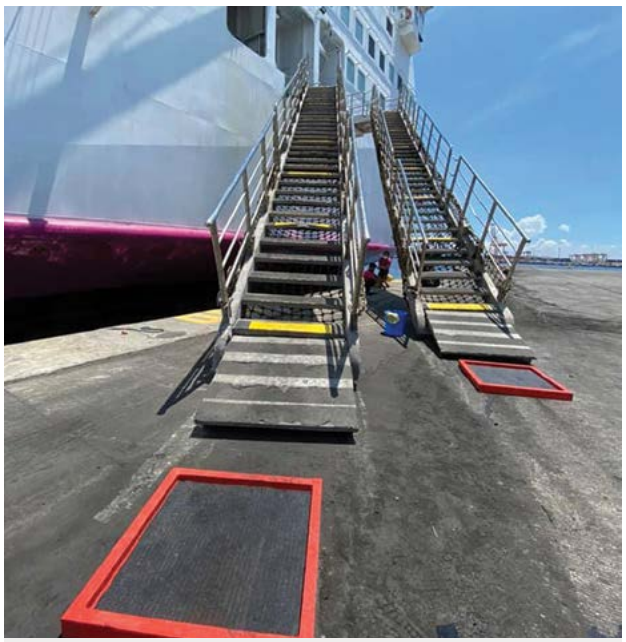
Rail service digitalization is also being undertaken to mitigate COVID-19 transmission. Payment options were broadened to include digital payment systems.

Figure 6.8 **Passenger Riding Capacity under GCQ**

LINE	LRV TYPE*	CAPACITY PER TRAIN SET**			PERCENT CAPACITY
		STANDING	SITTING	TOTAL	
LRT-1	1G	42	93	135	12%
	2G	40	112	152	
	3G	48	140	188	
LRT-2	-	48	112	160	10%
MRT-3	-	63	90	153	13%
PNR	8100 Series	102	96	198	20%
	8000 Series	73	70	143	
	DMU Rotem	84	72	156	

*Refers to Light Rail Vehicle.
**The number of passengers per train car is based on the physical simulation of passengers inside a train car while maintaining a one-meter physical distance.
Source: DOTr

Maritime Transport



Precautionary measures such as foot bath and stair markings are implemented in 2Go ship.
Photo Credit: 2Go Official Facebook Page

In maritime transportation, aside from precautionary measures, we also reduced to half the capacity of all vessels to enforce physical distancing among passengers and personnel.

To limit face-to-face transactions, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) is working on the installation of an Automated Passenger Ticketing System in all passenger terminals nationwide. This system was pilot-tested in March 2020 and is targeted to be implemented by the fourth quarter of 2020. In addition, on July 13, 2020, the PPA launched its electronic-payment portal to digitize the collection of port charges.

Air Transport

In accordance with health protocols, sanitary and precautionary measures were also institutionalized in our airport terminals. International standards in physical distancing inside aircrafts as prescribed by the International Civil Aviation Organization and International Air Transport Association, whenever applicable, are also being followed as the minimum standard. Websites, mobile applications, and education programs through social media, are being maximized to inform and engage the passengers about our safety protocols.

At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), physical distancing measures are being strictly implemented at all queuing points inside and outside the terminal buildings. To ensure physical distancing, floor markings were placed in all queuing points.

Since testing capability would be a prerequisite for the resumption of international travel, together with the GMR MEGAWIDE Cebu Airport Corporation, we opened on June 21, 2020 in the Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA) a dedicated COVID-19 PCR testing laboratory. The laboratory is designed to process 1,500 to 3,000 tests per day with test results available after 24 hours.

Airport-Dedicated COVID-19 PCR Testing Laboratory at the MCIA
Photo Credit: MCIA Official Facebook Page

We also closely coordinated with LGUs on the resumption of operations of airports. On July 16, 2020, we allowed 32 airports in GCQ areas to resume their commercial flights. Operations of international flights at the NAIA Terminal 3, which temporarily closed on March 28, 2020, resumed on July 8, 2020 *(see Figure 6.9)*. On the other hand, 14 airports were not allowed to resume commercial flights while flights with special clearance from the LGUs were allowed for three airports.

FIGURE 6.9 **Airports Allowed to Resume Flights as of July 16, 2020**

- Airports allowed to resume flights.
- Airports will be accepting flights subject to restrictions of the LGU.

Source: DOTr - CAAP

Restructuring the Education Sector

A Grade 1 student tries navigating the DepEd Commons website.
Photo Credit: PMS

We should not allow the COVID-19 pandemic to compromise the education of our youth. While the world is still looking for a vaccine to fully contain the virus, our government shall endeavor to provide education services while keeping in mind the safety, health, and well-being, not only of our students but also of our dedicated and hardworking teachers and school personnel.[187]

Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP)

The DepEd has adopted the BE-LCP, a holistic approach to education that will ensure learning opportunities in the time of COVID-19 and until face-to-face classes are safe to implement.

The BE-LCP adheres to the following principles:

- Protect the health, safety and well-being of learners, teachers and personnel, and prevent the further transmission of COVID-19;
- Ensure learning continuity;
- Facilitate the safe return of learners and teachers to school when face-to-face classes are allowed;
- Be sensitive to equity considerations and concerns, and endeavor to address them as best as we can; and
- Link and bridge the BE-LCP to DepEd's pivot to quality and into the future of education, under the framework of *Sulong EduKalidad* and Education Futures.

The BE-LCP is not just a response to the current pandemic but is also part of our long-term response to the call of Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 to develop resilient education systems, most especially during emergencies to ensure education continuity through curriculum and instruction that are adaptive to the needs of the current times.

The operationalization of the BE-LCP is guided by a Roadmap to Readiness, with key components and activities formulated by the DepEd, including the following:

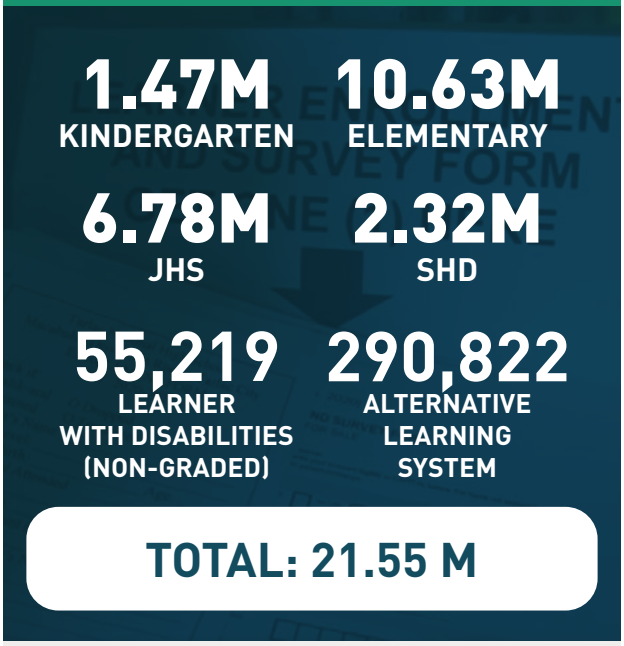
187 DepEd, July 20, 2020; and CHED, July 16, 2020.

Remote Enrollment

Aside from a purely online enrollment using various electronic platforms, enrollment drop boxes have been set up in schools and barangay halls for the picking up and dropping-off of the Learner and Enrollment Survey Form (LESF), to cater to families who have no access to virtual platforms for remote enrollment.

I am glad that these trying times did not weaken our youth's resolve to pursue education as evidenced by the 21.55 million total learners who have enrolled as of July 20, 2020. This total represents 77.55 percent of the 27.79 million enrollees in the previous school year (SY). The enrollment in public schools has reached 90 percent of the previous year's enrollment. To accommodate those who have yet to enroll, the DepEd will continue to accept late enrollees until September 2020 *(see Figure 6.10).*

Figure 6.10 **Enrollment as of July 20, 2020**



Numbers may not add up due to rounding.
Source: DepEd

Streamlining the K to 12 Curriculum to the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs)

The MELCs aim to focus instruction to the most essential and indispensable competencies that our learners must acquire as we anticipate challenges in learning delivery.

The primary determining factor considered by the DepEd in selecting the MELCs is "enduring" learning competencies such as research skills, reading comprehension, writing, map reading, and hypothesis testing, which are essential in many professions and in everyday life.

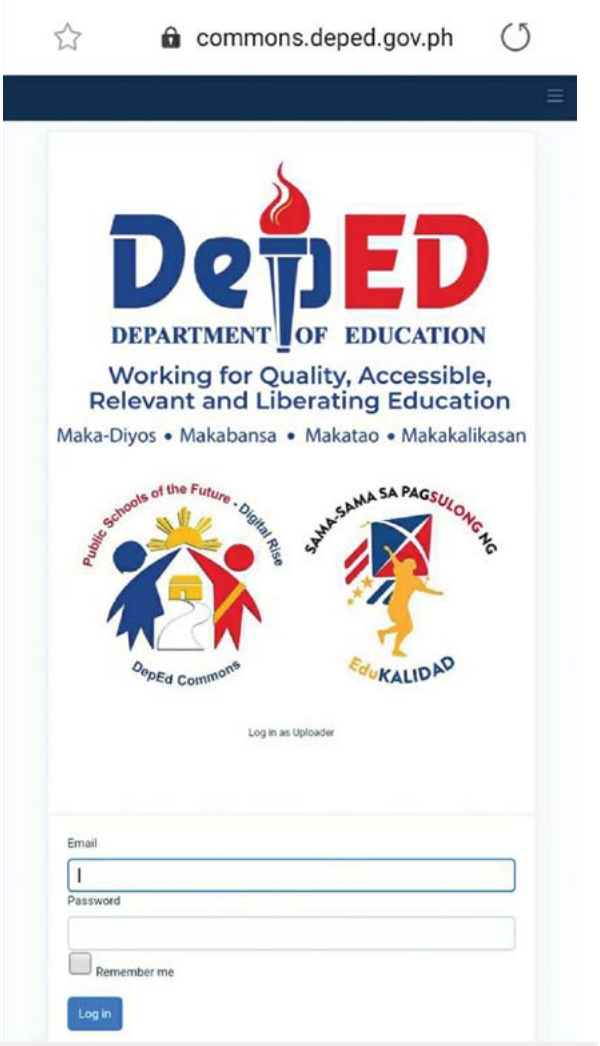
The 14,171 learning competencies under the K to 12 Curriculum have been streamlined to 5,689 MELCs, which will apply only for SY 2020–2021. The DepEd has maintained the K to 12 curriculum standards in the MELCs to ensure that the target learning outcomes are still achieved. The DepEd also incorporated regular feedback gathering from partners and stakeholders to further enhance and make the MELCs contribute to the broader review of the DepEd of the K to 12 curriculum.

Blended and Distance Learning Delivery

In blended and distance learning delivery, students can have access to lessons in the comfort and safety of their homes through various means. Self-Learning Modules (SLMs) in printed format can be distributed straight to the learners' respective houses or can be picked up by their parents at designated places within coordinated schedules.

The DepEd has finished developing SLMs for all subjects and grade levels. These SLMs will also be rendered into various formats, including digital, TV, and radio-based instructions.

Both students and teachers can also utilize online learning resources such as the DepEd Commons, an online portal where teaching and learning resources can be downloaded without data charges courtesy of telecommunications companies that partnered with the DepEd. As of July 10, 2020, 8.5 million students and teachers have registered and can access and download learning materials from the said online portal.



DepEd Commons home page
Source: DepEd

As online learning is one of the alternative delivery modalities for SY 2020–2021, the DepEd is in the process of assuring that the DepEd Commons will be able to accommodate 17 million users who will use it together with the DepEd's Learning Management System.

The Learning Management System is a software that will allow teachers to create virtual classes where they can assign activities to learners, monitor if the activities have been completed, and conduct online quizzes to assess comprehension.

In addition, the DepEd and DICT are building up the Public Education Network to connect all public schools and DepEd offices nationwide by 2022. For SY 2020–2021, all last mile schools, or those that are not easily accessible, are prioritized to be connected via satellite and energized via solar energy.

In support of the Learning Continuity Program through blended learning, 271,538 ICT equipment have been delivered to schools as of May 2020. Another set of 119,850 ICT equipment will be delivered before the end of this year. On top of these, the government is procuring more than 36,600 ICT equipment. All these, together with the more than one million ICT equipment that have been distributed by the DepEd, shall increase the number of schools with ICT equipment from 93 percent to 98.7 percent.

Sample of localized TV show derived from Most Essential Learning Competencies
Source: DepED Facebook Page

On July 2, 2020, the DepEd and DICT, through the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), requested television, radio, and cable operators to broadcast educational materials and instructions to reach more students. This is on top of the mandated airing by cable operators of free public service features, including education, cultural, and civic programs. This collaboration will also initiate the allocation of free internet bandwidth to public schools and encourage businesses that provide telecommunications services, community cable, and internet service to do the same.

Teachers' Upskilling and Reskilling for Blended and Distance Learning Delivery

Our educators need training to keep them abreast with the latest developments in teaching methods that can adapt to the conditions during the pandemic.

The National Educators Academy of the Philippines, DepEd's unit for the professional development of teachers and school leaders, developed training programs on blended or distance learning delivery modalities, which shall be implemented from July to August 2020. Webinars on various topics have also been conducted, benefitting 337,486 public school teachers and 10,521 private school teachers nationwide as of June 22, 2020.

The DepEd is conducting local simulations and dry runs of the modular learning delivery to see how it works under various conditions. One example is a simulation conducted in Navotas City from June 30 to July 3, 2020, which received positive feedback from parents, learners, legislators, education stakeholders, and the general public. Also, a national simulation and dry run to demonstrate the Department's readiness on a national scale for the August 24, 2020 opening of classes is scheduled for the second week of August.

Flexible Learning in Higher Education

The higher education sector's main concern for Academic Year (AY) 2020–2021 is to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while maintaining continuity in the provision of quality education. In line with this, the CHED has shifted teaching-learning process from the traditional in-campus instruction to flexible learning. Recognizing the varying situations and adaptive capacity of college students to flexible learning methods, the CHED has conducted public consultation on the customization of delivery modes responsive to students' needs.

Under the flexible learning method, higher education institutions (HEIs)

"I was amazed when I first opened the PHL CHED Connect because it already contained various ebooks and information in different kinds of fields. It is more amazing because it is easy to navigate. It can definitely help us college students this school year especially in this time of pandemic where online classes are very reliant on these websites. I'm looking forward to utilizing the PHL CHED Connect this coming school year."

Trixy Marie Macaraeg
Student

shall implement mechanisms so that students can receive, or access printed or digital course packages, which may include course syllabi, study guides, learning activities, schedule of lessons, grading system, and student support systems, among others, to assist students in managing their study time and maximizing their learning.

On June 23, 2020, the CHED launched the PHL CHED Connect (*https://phlconnect.ched.gov.ph/*), an online portal containing free learning resources contributed by leading HEIs and international learning institutions (e.g., British Council Philippines, University of Saskatchewan of Canada, Universidad Catolica de Murcia of Spain). These resources cover a variety of disciplines including agriculture, architecture, business, engineering, fine arts, humanities, mass communication, and medical studies, for students and educators in tertiary education. The CHED will also give grants for the development of online and offline learning resources to widen the reach of PHL CHED Connect.

Furthermore, the CHED directed HEIs to explore partnerships with relevant agencies and organizations to strengthen and complement existing resources, infrastructure, or connectivity to ensure undisrupted learning of the students.

Opening of Classes for AY 2020-2021

HEIs shall adopt a rolling opening of classes based on the mode of learning delivery, compliance with minimum health standards and protocols, and situations on the ground *(see Table 6.3)*.

Table 6.3 **Schedule of Opening of Classes Based on Learning Delivery**

LEARNING DELVERY	OPENING OF CLASSES
Full online education	Any time after May 31, 2020
Flexible learning, a combination of physical classes and use of other alternatives	Anytime in August 2020
Significant face-to-face or in person mode	Not earlier than September 1, 2020

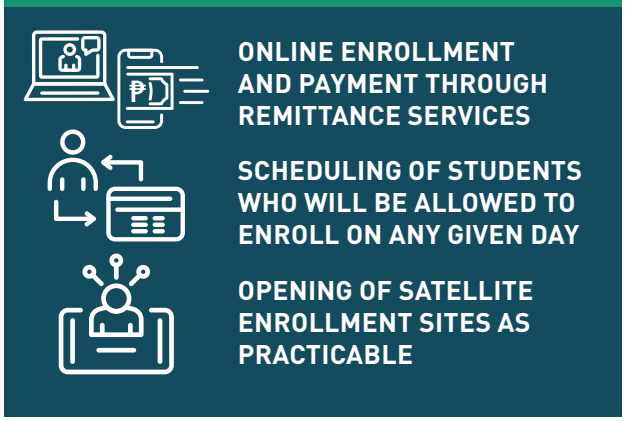
Source: CHED

To ensure quality of education, regardless of the mode of delivery, HEIs must ensure appropriate facility for delivering instruction, faculty complement, and student support. The CHED has likewise directed HEIs to work with stakeholders and prepare a contingency or continuity plan in case there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in their respective jurisdictions. School ceremonies and activities that constitute mass gathering remain prohibited in high risk quarantine areas.

Flexible Enrollment

HEIs shall implement any of the flexible enrollment procedures for AY 2020-2021

Figure 6.11 **Enrollment Procedures in HEIs**



Source: CHED

(see Figure 6.11).

Unhampered Provision of Scholarship Grants

The importance of scholarship grants to help our youth pursue higher education is best exemplified in this time of pandemic. Thus, the CHED advised HEIs to establish clear communication plans to ensure that scholarship grants and other tertiary education subsidies of qualified and deserving students shall not be hampered. If needed, they may impose more lenient policies such as the policy on maximum residence, to ensure that the students' academic standing or status in the programs is not adversely affected.

Enhancing the capabilities of HEI Faculty

The CHED has partnered with the DICT to enhance the capability of HEI faculty for flexible learning. A series of webinars to improve teaching essentials were conducted from May 26 to June 29, 2020.

We are also pursuing other measures to equip our HEI educators with the necessary skills to adapt to the new normal such as the establishment of multi-media or learning resource centers, which will be used by faculty members for online teaching; establishment of e-library or open educational resources; utilization of a learning management system; grants or capacity-building programs on transitioning to flexible learning; and utilization of networking to facilitate capacity building and resource sharing.

Currently, the CHED is identifying the SUCs with existing learning management system to which the DICT may provide possible hosting support for free. A survey instrument to determine the ICT competency of faculty is also being developed. Based on the result of the survey, the CHED and DICT will provide targeted learning interventions to address the identified ICT-knowledge gaps. Relatedly, training on data privacy and cyber security for faculty and administrators will also be provided.

Assistance to Private Schools

The pandemic also affected the operations of our partners in the private sector.

The DepEd has existing assistance programs to private schools under the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE). These programs include Education Service Contracting (ESC) and Senior High School (SHS) Voucher Program, which provide tuition subsidies to students in private Junior High Schools (JHSs) and SHS and non-DepEd schools, respectively. Meanwhile, the Teachers' Salary Subsidy is a GASTPE program that provides annual salary subsidy to full-time teachers in ESC-participating JHSs.

In addition, the LBP offers loan assistance to schools through the Academic Development to Empower the Masses towards Endless Opportunities (ACADEME) lending program. Under this, the LBP shall provide credit fund to private high schools, private Technical-Vocational and Education Training (TVET) Institutions, and private HEIs, allowing these institutions to provide continuing education to their students through the study-now and pay-later scheme.

As of July 1, 2020, PhP260 million worth of loans have been approved and over 80 private educational institutions have expressed interest in accessing the credit facility *(see Figure 6.12)*.

Figure 6.12 **LBP ACADEME Program**

ELIGIBLE LOAN PURPOSE

Refinancing/rediscounting of Promissory Notes (PNs) issued by the parents or benefactors of students to enable students to enroll, continue and complete their studies.

LOANABLE AMOUNT

70% of the PNs issued by the parents/ benefactors of the students on a per semester basis and subject further to a maximum amount based on the school's net borrowing capacity as per LBP computation.

INTEREST RATE

3% per annum fixed up to the maturity date

Source: LBP

The LBP also offers direct loans of up to PhP300,000 per parent or guardian of qualified student of the DepEd, CHED, or TESDA under the Interim Student's Loan for Tuitions towards Upliftment of Education for the Development of the Youth (I-STUDY) lending program, which shall cover tuition and other enrollment-related fees. The program will be available from SY 2021 to 2022. The program offers an affordable fixed interest rate of five percent per annum for short-term loans for pre-school, primary, and secondary students payable within one year, as well as for long-term loans for tertiary students payable up to a maximum of three years, inclusive of one year grace period on the principal.[188]

188 LBP, July 15, 2020.

Way Forward: Towards a Safer and Better Philippines under the Next Normal

As I have always emphasized, in our transition to the new normal, the health and safety of our people is paramount, *Buhay Muna*. We shall always balance this with the need to spur the economy.

Building on our initiated efforts, we will continue to undertake technology-driven, integrated, and sustainable reforms that will revolutionize our transportation sector to become safer and more efficient, reliable, and environment-friendly.

The new normal also calls for less face-to-face government transactions. As such, we shall endeavor to allow our people to access more government transactions online. Given this, we shall also aim for faster and more reliable internet services nationwide.

When a vaccine becomes available and face-to-face schooling resumes, we must remain vigilant. We need to keep our guard up by observing the necessary health standards in schools; disinfecting school premises; and repairing or rehabilitating classrooms and calamity-related damages.

Moreover, we aim to support businesses by providing liquidity and equity infusion and targeted tax incentives. In this regard, I call on our partners in Congress for the swift passage of our proposed bills on spending and capital support such as the CREATE, FIST, GUIDE, and Rural Agricultural and Fisheries Development Financing System. In 2021, we shall be implementing a reprioritized 2021 budget and undertaking further structural reforms to better prepare our country for the next normal.

Let me reiterate my appeal, as we step up our economic activities, let us ensure that health measures are strictly followed. Let us always act with caution not out of fear but based on faith in our collective capacity to keep the pandemic under control and move forward as one towards a Better Philippines in the Next Normal.

"Together, let us work hard to lay down the physical foundations of a more progressive and prosperous nation so that our countrymen will enjoy at the very least, not a rich life, not even a bar lower than that, but at least a comfortable life."

The President's speech during the inauguration of the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange on November 5, 2018

The 89.21-km Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX) connecting Tarlac City and Rosario, La Union becomes fully operational in July 2020.
Photo Credit: DPWH

Chapter 7

Dispersing Economic Activities Toward Balanced Regional Development

Equipped with the learnings from this pandemic, we will bounce back stronger as one nation. Through our innate resilience as Filipinos, we have weathered many storms. We will not allow the gains that we achieved these past years to be put to waste by this pandemic. We will take this opportunity to further enhance our strategies towards building forward better in the next normal.

Even before the advent of this pandemic, a balanced, responsive, and sustained regional development has always been one of my top priorities. For decades, our country's development had been consistently inequitable. Economic growth was mostly concentrated in the metropolis, attracting people from the countryside to flock to the cities in search of better opportunities. In the case of Metro Manila, this has resulted in congestion, urban decay, perpetual traffic, and proliferation of slum areas.

We need to commence the gradual dispersal of the capital's dense population, while at the same time addressing the ailment that has caused its decay. We likewise need to propel and sustain economic development across the nation to unburden our traditional urban centers from the perils of congestion and pollution, which the current pandemic has painfully reminded us of. Consequently, this shall also provide more Filipinos with better opportunities for development.

Ongoing construction of the 46.03-km Agusan del Sur-Agusan del Norte Bypass Road to connect the two provinces.
Photo Credit: DPWH

We rationalized our infrastructure projects under the Build, Build, Build Program to focus on high-impact projects, prioritizing transport and mobility and information and communications technology. This list of infrastructure projects is evolving and subject to adjustments based on need. A significant number of these projects shall be completed or partially operational by 2022, while the rest shall be made shovel-ready moving into the next administration.[189] We shall ensure the swift implementation of these projects, which would help our nation bounce back.

Together with enhancing national connectivity towards regional development, we also institutionalized the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program, which shall harmonize our strategies to promote balanced urban and rural development through the empowerment of local industries, boosting of agricultural productivity, provision of adequate social services, and development of infrastructure.

189 BCDA, November 6, 2019.

Empowering the People through Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

This tech-savvy senior citizen proves that there is no age limit when it comes to connectivity.
Photo Credit: DICT

ICT drives socio-economic development. According to the World Bank, ICT promotes economic growth by encouraging investments, generating revenues and employment, enhancing competitiveness, and dispersing economic activities in the countryside.[190]

Since the start of my Administration, we pursued improvements in ICT to promote productivity and efficiency to help us achieve our developmental aspirations. We have gained grounds in reforming the country's ICT landscape through game-changing reforms such as the opening of the telecommunications industry to more competition. However, we acknowledge that more needs to be done, particularly towards improving internet speed, cost, and accessibility. We shall continue to pursue efforts towards these, alongside measures to ensure cybersecurity and the protection of the Filipino from cybercrimes, especially in the age of the internet economy.

Ensuring Internet Accessibility to All Filipinos[191]

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to minimize face-to-face interactions and migrate to more technology- and internet-based transactions. Although the pandemic abruptly disrupted our lives, we were able to start the shift towards the new normal in doing business *(see Chapter 3 for online government transactions and Chapter 4 for online services for MSMEs).* As we move to the next normal, we will pursue better facilities and initiatives to connect every *Juana and Juan Dela Cruz.*

190 World Bank, Information and Communication Technologies: Results Profile, April 13, 2013.
191 DICT, July 17 and 20, 2020.

Intensified the Free Wi-Fi for All (FW4A) Project. Even prior to the pandemic, we invested in projects to provide Filipinos with internet access. We implemented in 2017 the FW4A (formerly *Pipol Konek)*, which provides free internet access in 1,634 cities and municipalities nationwide. Under the project, we established live sites in public areas and State Universities and Colleges where people can access free internet service. From the 1,396 live sites as of June 2018, we increased the number to 2,692 by June 2019, and further expanded this to 4,031 by June 2020, serving 6.88 million users across the country.

Connected Far-flung Government Facilities and Offices. In addition to the FW4A sites, we installed free Wi-Fi connection in 221 government facilities and offices nationwide, particularly in far-flung areas.

To ensure that every Filipino is properly equipped as we move to the next normal, we shall expedite the establishment and activation of 23,100 additional live sites by 2021. We aim to almost triple this number to 67,233 live sites in various areas of the country by 2022.

Improving ICT Competitiveness[192]

We acknowledge that we are among the countries with the slowest and most expensive internet connection in the world. This was made more apparent during the onset of the community quarantines as internet traffic became saturated. From the very start of this Administration, we committed to address these concerns and provide our people with reliable internet connectivity.

National Broadband Plan (NBP). To provide fast and reliable internet connection even in the hardest to reach places of the country, we launched the NBP in 2017. It aims to improve the country's internet speed through the provision of fiber optic cables and wireless technologies.

In November 2017, the DICT signed a Landing Party Agreement with the Bases Conversion and Development Authority and Facebook for the government's construction of the Luzon Bypass Infrastructure (LBI). The LBI is a 250-kilometer high-speed internet cable network corridor that will provide a terrestrial bypass route for international submarine cable owners who seek to avoid damage to their infrastructure in the earthquake-prone Luzon Strait.
As of June 2020, we have completed

The National Broadband Plan shall ensure stronger and faster internet connection and accessibility.
Photo Credit: DICT

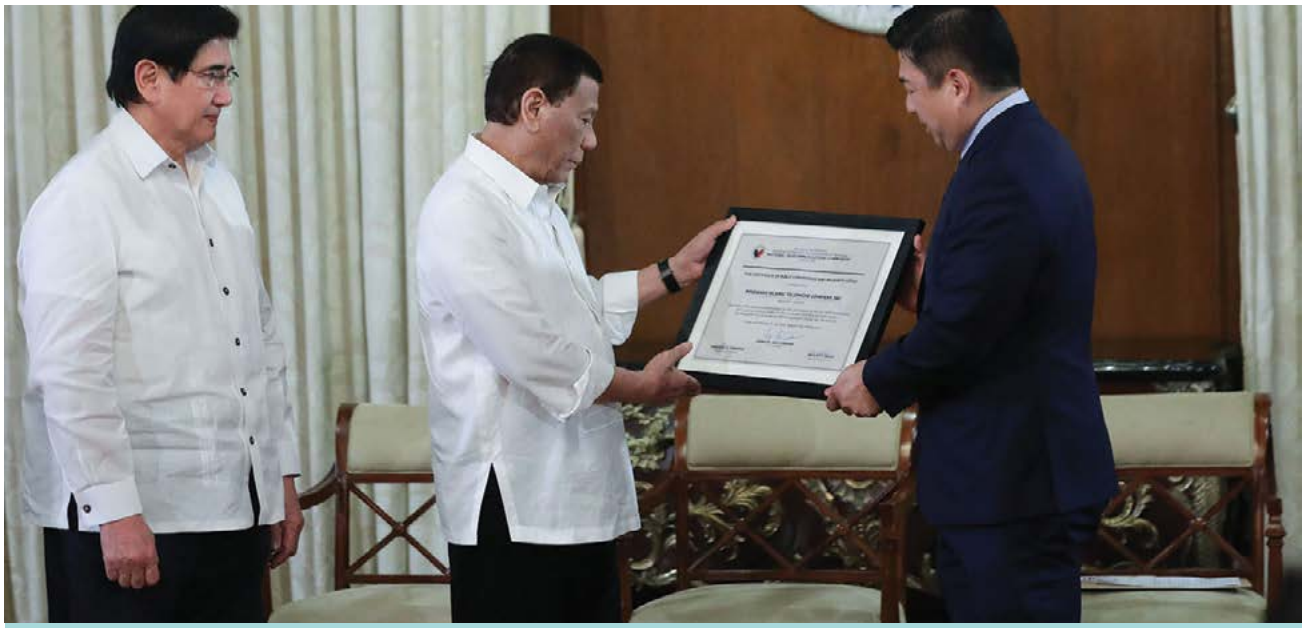
192 DICT, July 17 and 20, 2020; and Office of the Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs and Projects (OPAFPP), July 20, 2020.

the construction of the Cable Landing Stations in Baler, Aurora, and in Poro Point, La Union. We aim to complete the terrestrial roadwork and the installation of vital ICT equipment by end-July and end-October 2020, respectively. These shall enable us to access two Terabits (Tb) of data capacity.

The NBP and its facilities shall be online by the end of 2021, to provide every Filipino with fast and stable internet connection.

New Player in the Telecommunications Market. In 2019, we welcomed Dito Telecommunity Corporation, then known as the Mindanao Islamic Telephone Company, Inc. (MISLATEL), as the country's third telecommunications network. Dito's entry into the telecommunications industry is expected to ramp up competition in the market, which shall ultimately redound to faster, cheaper, and reliable internet connection for the common Filipino.

In October 2019, Dito entered into agreements with various tower construction and key contractor companies and acquired more than 3,000 sites for its infrastructure development. It also signed an agreement with the League of Municipalities of the Philippines to provide a dedicated nationwide fiber network that would directly connect the different municipalities across the country and public areas, including schools.



"Now that we are moving towards greater capacity in information and communications technology, we will have better opportunities to improve our personal, social, political, and economic aspirations." - President Rodrigo Roa Duterte

The President presents the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to MISLATEL on July 8, 2019 as DICT Secretary Gregorio Honasan II looks on.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Out of its first-year commitment of 1,300 towers, 300 are now live, which cover nine percent of the population, while 500 others have been erected and are set to operate by July 2020. It has also signed deals with three common tower builders for 500 more towers. Dito is expected to commence commercial operations by March 2021 to provide an average internet speed of 27 megabits per second (Mbps) within its first year, which is significantly faster than the existing broadband speed in the country. This will further increase to 55 Mbps within five years after its initial operations.

Common Tower Policy. To address the nation's connectivity needs and ensure more access to cost-efficient ICT infrastructure, we are implementing the Common Tower Policy, which encourages private investments in the propagation of telecommunications towers in the country, especially in unserved and underserved areas. The Common Tower Policy allows telecommunication companies (telcos) to share towers, helping them bring down their operational costs and avoid the duplication of network resources.

In June 2020, we issued the policy guidelines on Co-location and Sharing of Passive Telecommunication Tower Infrastructure for Macro Cell Sites. Under these guidelines, we allowed independent tower companies to construct cell sites and fill the estimated 50,000 cellular towers needed to speed up telco connection. In addition, we are also set to install IP Microwave Radios on existing communication towers in 28 cities and municipalities across 27 provinces to strengthen network signal.

Mobile Number Portability (MNP) Act. Last year, I signed into law RA no. 11202 or the MNP Act, which allows subscribers to keep their mobile number even if they switch service providers or change their subscription from postpaid to prepaid, or vice-versa, free of charge. Under this law, consumers shall not be charged porting fees and no interconnection charge among the mobile network operators: Globe, Smart, and Dito.

Globe, PLDT, and Dito formed the Telecommunications Connectivity, Inc. for the implementation of the MNP Act. The three companies also tapped Syniverse to be the MNP service provider. Syniverse will bring in the technical infrastructure that would serve as the clearinghouse of the telcos and ensure the smooth implementation of number porting services.

By 2021, we shall pursue the initial implementation of the MNP Act. With this, and the Common Tower Policy, every Filipino shall enjoy stronger signal and better quality of mobile phone communications.

Increasing Productivity through ICT[193]

ICT plays an important role in intensifying information accessibility, enhancing economic performance, and maximizing opportunities. As we move away from the effects of the

193 DICT, July 17 and 20, 2020.

pandemic, we will continue to equip every Filipino with the necessary facilities and mechanisms to improve their lives through ICT.

Technology for Education, Employment, Entrepreneurs, and Economic Development (Tech4ED) Project. Alongside our efforts to provide better and reliable connections, we also aim to maximize the opportunities associated with technology and connectivity. Thus, we implemented the Tech4ED Project, which aims to provide opportunities for employment and empower entrepreneurs in the countryside through an ICT portal in a common center. A Tech4ED Center is a self-sustaining shared facility that serves as a conduit for the efficient delivery of various government services. Each Tech4ED Center is provided with access to the Tech4ED Platform, which has various content and learning materials classified into eight segments, namely eAssist, eMarketPlace, eGovServices, Gender and Development, eAgri, eHealth, digitaljobsPH, and eEduSkills.

From 3,144 centers in June 2019, we have increased the number of established Tech4ED Centers to 4,330 nationwide, benefitting 161,310 registered users.

ICT Capacity Building. To enhance the competitiveness of Filipinos in ICT, we launched the ICT Academy, an integrated system aimed at developing the ICT skills of Filipinos towards increased productivity and efficiency. The ICT Academy will provide ICT-related training to upskill and reskill our local workforce, and increase their capability to get higher value jobs and participate in the digital economy. The ICT Academy will be made accessible to Filipinos through the Skills Window PH and the Digital Transformation Centers.

Government and private sector workers, freelancers, entrepreneurs, or students would be able to gain ICT skills that would enable them to adapt to the economy in the new normal. The Skills Window PH is composed of six main components: social community, learning management system, job sourcing, data analytics, mobile and desktop apps, and maintenance system.

Furthermore, we will be boosting the capacity of existing Tech4ED centers by upgrading them into Digital Transformation Centers that would become venues where Filipinos can learn basic and higher-level digital skills.

Our investments in ICT infrastructure will be complemented by similar investments in other high-impact infrastructure to further enhance our inter- and intra-island mobility and connectivity.

Enhancing Connectivity

As part of our efforts to pursue inclusive and sustainable economic growth, we have strategically distributed infrastructure and connectivity projects nationwide. As of end-December 2019, we have spent PhP2.93 trillion to fast-track the completion of our infrastructure projects without compromising their quality. This is more than a hundred percent of the PhP1.35 trillion spent during the comparable first three and a half years of the four previous Administrations combined.[194] This is a testament to our dedication in ensuring mobility and connectivity for all Filipinos.

Boosting Maritime Connectivity[195]

Across regions and islands, farmers and micro-entrepreneurs prefer sea transport for their products because of its affordability relative to air travel. Thus, we pursued the modernization of existing seaports, construction of new ones, and increasing the roll-on/roll-off (RoRo) trade routes. These are also meant to address congestion in our major ports and ensure that remote areas would have access to maritime transport.

Recognizing the importance of the RoRo service to our small Filipino entrepreneurs, we opened 20 additional maritime trade routes on top of the existing 120. These increased the country's total maritime trade routes to 140 as of May 2019. These routes now cater to 290 ships and 7.1 million vehicles yearly. We target to open 24 additional trade routes within my term to cover more provinces *(see Annex Table 7.1 for the list of RoRo routes targeted to be opened by 2022).*

We are also modernizing our existing ports and constructing new ones. As of June 2020, we have virtually inaugurated 14 completed port projects nationwide. We expect to further spur economic activities in other areas with the targeted completion of 22 other port projects within the year *(see Figure 7.1 on the map of additional RoRo routes opened and previously inaugurated port projects; and Annex Table 7.2 for ongoing projects targeted to be completed within 2020).*

Improving Air Connectivity[196]

Our old and dilapidated airports with incomplete facilities have caused inconvenience to our fellow Filipinos and the tourists visiting our country. I have personally witnessed these hardships – from flight delays to congestion in terminals – which the Filipino people do not deserve. To address these, we prioritized the decongestion of our airports, especially the NAIA, through the construction of new airports and the improvement of existing ones *(see Figure 7.2 for select completed and ongoing airport projects; and Annex Table 7.3 for other select ongoing projects).*

To decongest major airports such as the NAIA, we installed technologies to capacitate them to accommodate night flights. This means that domestic flights departing from the NAIA do not have to be crammed during daytime,

194 DBM, July 17, 2020.
195 DOTr, July 16, 2020; and OPAFPP, July 20, 2020.
196 DOTr, July 16, 2020; and OPAFPP, July 20, 2020.

Figure 7.1 RoRo Routes Opened and Port Projects Previously Inaugurated

Source: DOTr

Figure 7.2 **Select Completed and Ongoing Airport Projects**

Source: DOTr

thereby reducing flight delays. From only 14 in 2016, we have increased the number of airports that are capable of accommodating night flights to 22 as of July 2020. By 2022, we aim to night-rate 37 airports in the country *(see Figure 7.3 and Annex Table 7.4)*.

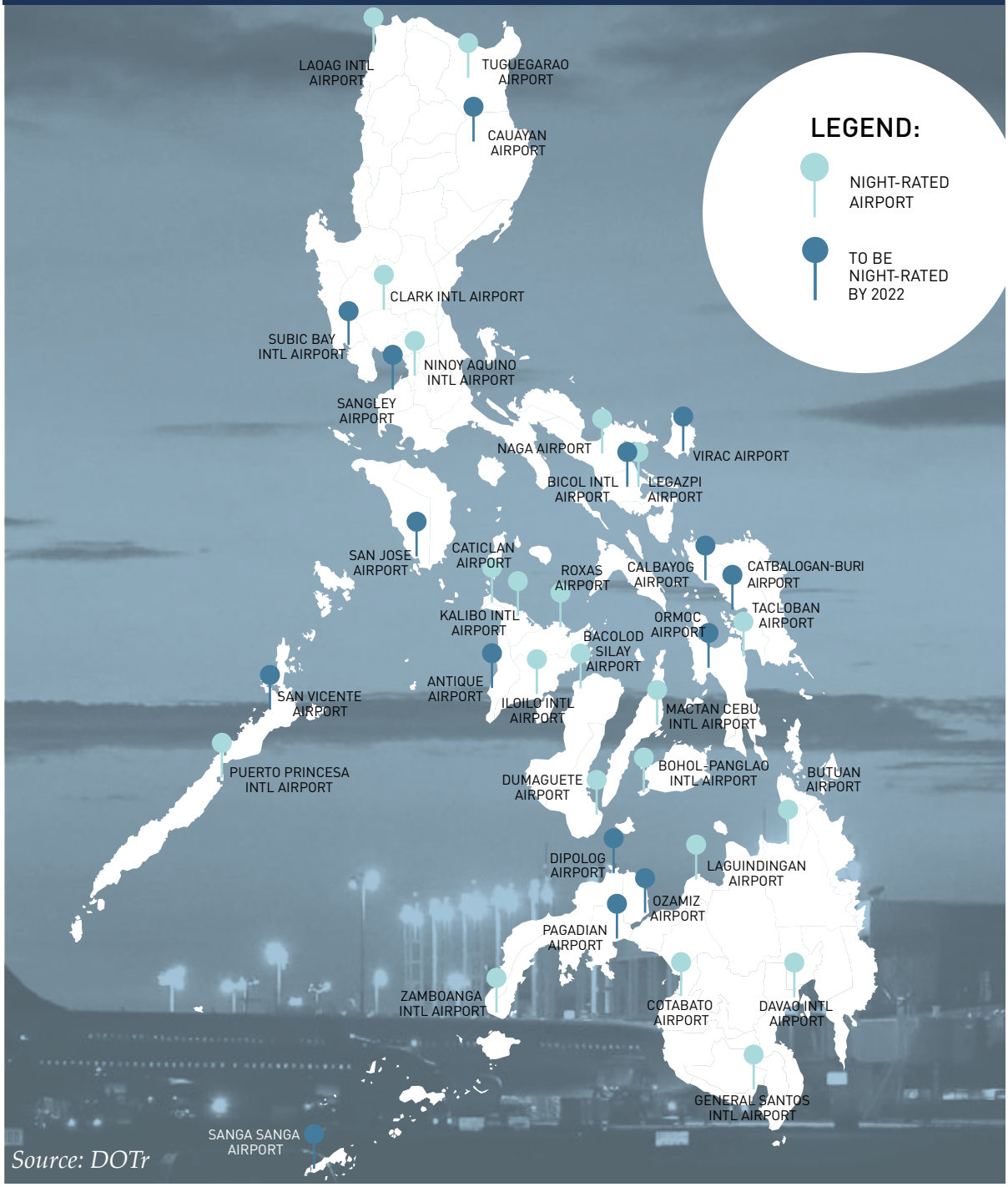
Our ongoing renovation of runways and taxiways and enhancement of the air navigation system of the NAIA, coupled with our close coordination with our private partners have resulted in the steady improvement of the on-time performance (OTP) of our airlines. The Air Carriers' Association of the Philippines reported an increase in OTP of airline carriers in NAIA from 50 percent in July 2016 to 78 percent as of September 2019. By June 2022, we aim to increase our OTP rating to 85 to 90 percent.

Expanding Land Connectivity[197]

The daily difficulties faced by the riding public concerns me. It pains me that our people need to leave their homes at dawn just to get to their workplace on time. To

197 DPWH, July 16, 2020; DOTr, July 16, 2020; and OPAFPP, July 20, 2020.

Figure 7.3 **Night-rating of Airports in the Philippines**



ease the daily suffering of motorists, we prioritized the continuous expansion and upgrading of strategic roads and expressways. Thus, we pursued the construction and development of 23,657 km of roads and 4,959 bridges from July 2016 to May 2020.

Luzon Spine Expressway Network (LSEN). The government is fast-tracking the completion of around 900-km of high standard highways and expressways that will form part of the LSEN *(see Figure 7.4 for ongoing projects under the LSEN; and Annex Table 7.5 for other proposed projects).*

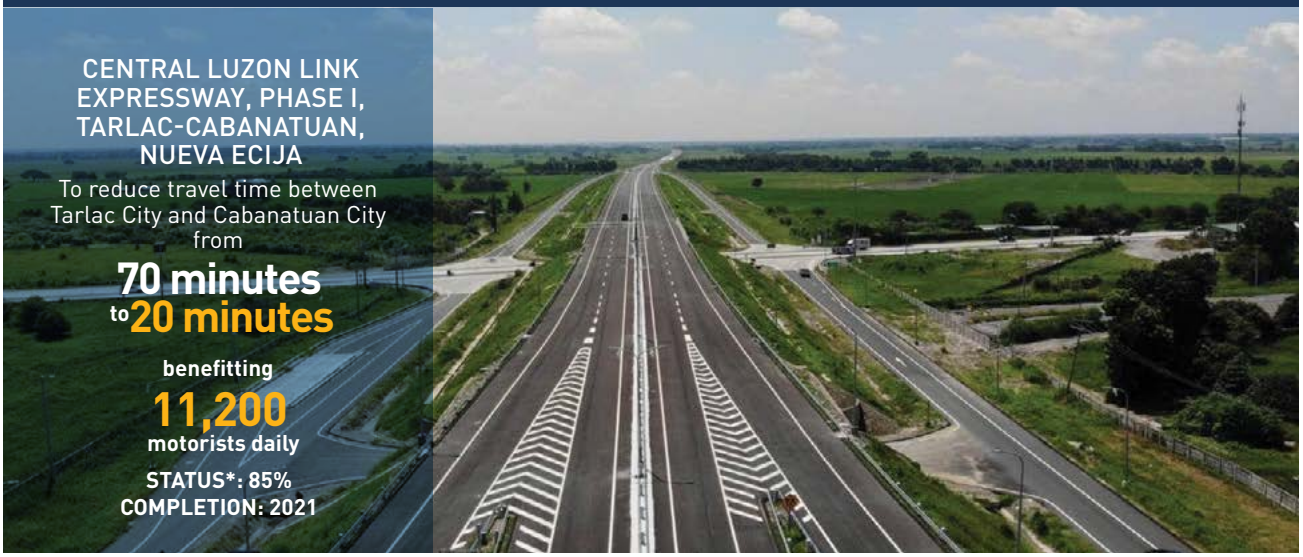
These will reduce travel time from Metro Manila to La Union from six hours and 55 minutes to three hours and 10 minutes. Moreover, travel time from Ilocos to Bicol will be reduced from 19 hours and 40 minutes to eight hours and 15 minutes.

Under the LSEN, we completed the NAIA Expressway Phase II in April 2017; the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) Harbor Link, Segment 10 in March 2019; Arterial (Plaridel) By-Pass Road, Phase II in 2018; NLEX Harbor Link, C3-R10 Section in June 2020; and the last segment of the Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX) in July 2020 *(see Figure 7.5 for further details on the newly constructed TPLEX).*

Continued Implementation of Inter-island Linkage Projects. We also envisioned the ease of travel between islands through the construction of 10 short- and long-span bridges, which would link island provinces via land travel. These bridges offer an alternative, more affordable, and more efficient mode of transportation to the public *(see Annex Table 7.6 for Proposed Inter-Island Linkage Projects).*

Among these projects is the Panguil Bay Bridge. In November 2018, we held the groundbreaking of this 3.1-km bridge that will connect the City of Tangub in Misamis Occidental to the Municipality of Tubod in Lanao del Norte. Once completed in 2023, it will only take seven minutes to reach Tangub City from Tubod using the bridge compared to the 2.5 hours it would take using the 102-km route via the Tubod-Kapatagan-Molave-Tangub road. In addition, travel time between Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental and Mukas, Kolambugan, Lanao Del Norte will be reduced from 2.5 hours using RoRo operations to 20 minutes using the Panguil Bay Bridge. This will benefit 9,226 motorists daily.

Figure 7.4 **Select Ongoing Projects under the LSEN**



*As of June 2020
Source and Photo Credit: DPWH

Figure 7.4 Select Ongoing Projects under the LSEN

*As of June 2020

Source and Photo Credit: DPWH

Figure 7.5 **Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX)**

Source and Photo Credit: DPWH

Railways. Our train commuters continue to suffer from long queues and technical difficulties, which resulted in train stoppages and unloading of passengers. We are addressing the problems in our railway system and recognize that more needs to be done urgently. We are implementing several initiatives, in coordination with our private partners, to improve our train system and better cater to the needs of our commuters, providing them with affordable, accessible, and comfortable alternative transportation *(see Annex Table 7.7 for the list of ongoing railway projects)*.

In June 2020, we deployed four additional train sets, increasing the total number of the MRT-3 operating train sets from 15 to 19. We also made significant progress on the rail replacement of the MRT-3 to increase the speed of our trains from 30 kilometers per hour (kph) to 40 kph. These will reduce your waiting time between trains from nine to six minutes. At the end of the year, we hope to further increase train speed to 60 kph through the completion of rail replacement by September 2020, which would cut down the waiting time between trains to only 3.5 minutes.

Our continuous improvement works reduced unloading incidents from 586 in 2016 to 57 in 2018; and to only 28 in 2019. I hope that we can further decrease the delays and critical incidents with our ongoing efforts to enhance the performance of our railway systems, which include the deployment of additional trains in the coming years *(see Table 7.1)*.

We are also pursuing the expansion of our train services through the opening of the Philippine National Railways (PNR) North (Manila–Clark, Pampanga), South Commuter (Manila– Calamba, Laguna), and South Long Haul (Manila–Bicol) to cover provinces outside Metro Manila. Partial operations covering these areas shall start by 2022.

Easing Mobility[198]

Traffic congestion is a persistent daily problem for our people. According to

198 DPWH, July 16, 2020; MMDA, July 17, 2020; OPAFPP, July 20, 2020.

Table 7.1 **Additional Train Sets for Deployment**		
Line	**No. of Additional Train Sets**	**Status**
LRT-1	30 four-car train sets	• 12 train sets will be delivered in June 2021. • Additional train sets will be deployed per month until June 2022.
LRT-2	14 four-car train sets	• Seven train sets will be delivered in the second quarter of 2023. • Remaining seven train sets in the first quarter of 2024
MRT-3	12 four-car train sets	• Ongoing coordination with Sumitomo and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for the deployment of Dalian train sets
PNR	Nine train sets	• Six train sets were delivered and operationalized. • Three train sets will be delivered by August 2020.

Source: DOTr

the 2019 Traffic Index of TomTom,[199] a Filipino wastes an average of 10 days and 17 hours per year due to traffic. This deeply concerns me as Filipinos are seemingly robbed of their quality time for work, livelihood, and their family. Moreover, the JICA projected that economic losses due to traffic would rise to PhP5.4 billion a day by 2035 if interventions were not made. In view of this, I have ordered the agencies responsible for traffic management and infrastructure development to undertake interventions to reduce traffic congestion.

Intensified enforcement of traffic regulations. We intensified our traffic management operations to facilitate traffic flow and ensure safety of road users. The Inter-Agency Council for Traffic (i-ACT) has impounded colorum and apprehended out-of-line vehicles in Metro Manila. Through the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), we implemented the No Contact Traffic Apprehension Policy; issued tickets on illegally parked vehicles; traffic violators; towed illegally parked vehicles; and removed illegal vendors along roads and streets in Metro Manila *(see Table 7.2 for accomplishments).*

Table 7.2 **Efforts to Ease Traffic Congestion in Metro Manila**						
Particulars	**2016 (Jul-Dec)**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020 (Jan-June)**	**Total**
Colorum vehicles impounded	215	813	933	654	215	2,830
Traffic violation tickets issued	10,312	26,110	62,497	475,896	124,351	699,166
Illegally parked vehicles towed	5,211	19,126	21,884	1,872	649	48,742
Illegal vendors removed	7,616	36,621	26,270	6, 215	3,255	79,977

Source: MMDA

199 An international company focusing on location technology, e.g., global positioning system, and global traffic situation.

Clearing of roads nationwide. In my State of the Nation Address in July 2019, I ordered all LGUs to recover and clear public roads that were being used for private purposes such as parking spaces. Through the help of our LGUs, we have cleared a total of 402,460 obstructions, i.e., illegally parked vehicles, from public roads nationwide to ensure the smooth flow of traffic and seamless travel of responders and relief operations in times of disasters. As of December 2019, we issued show-cause orders to 101 non-compliant LGUs, of which, 15 were administratively charged in December 2019. I am strongly urging the LGUs to be responsible in ensuring that our roads are clear to help ease the mobility of our countrymen, particularly in times of disasters. Our government is serious on this.

Construction of bridges in Metro Manila. We are also pursuing bridge projects to open more routes to reduce travel time and traffic in major roads in Metro Manila, especially EDSA. Within my Administration, we started the construction of bridges to allow our motorists to reach their destinations safely in a shorter period of time *(see Figure 7.6 for ongoing bridge construction projects in Metro Manila; and Annex Table 7.8 for proposed bridges in Metro Manila).*

DPWH Secretary Mark Villar inspects the Skyway Stage 3, an 18.83-kilometer elevated expressway traversing Metro Manila to decongest traffic in EDSA and other major roads in the region.
Photo Credit: DPWH

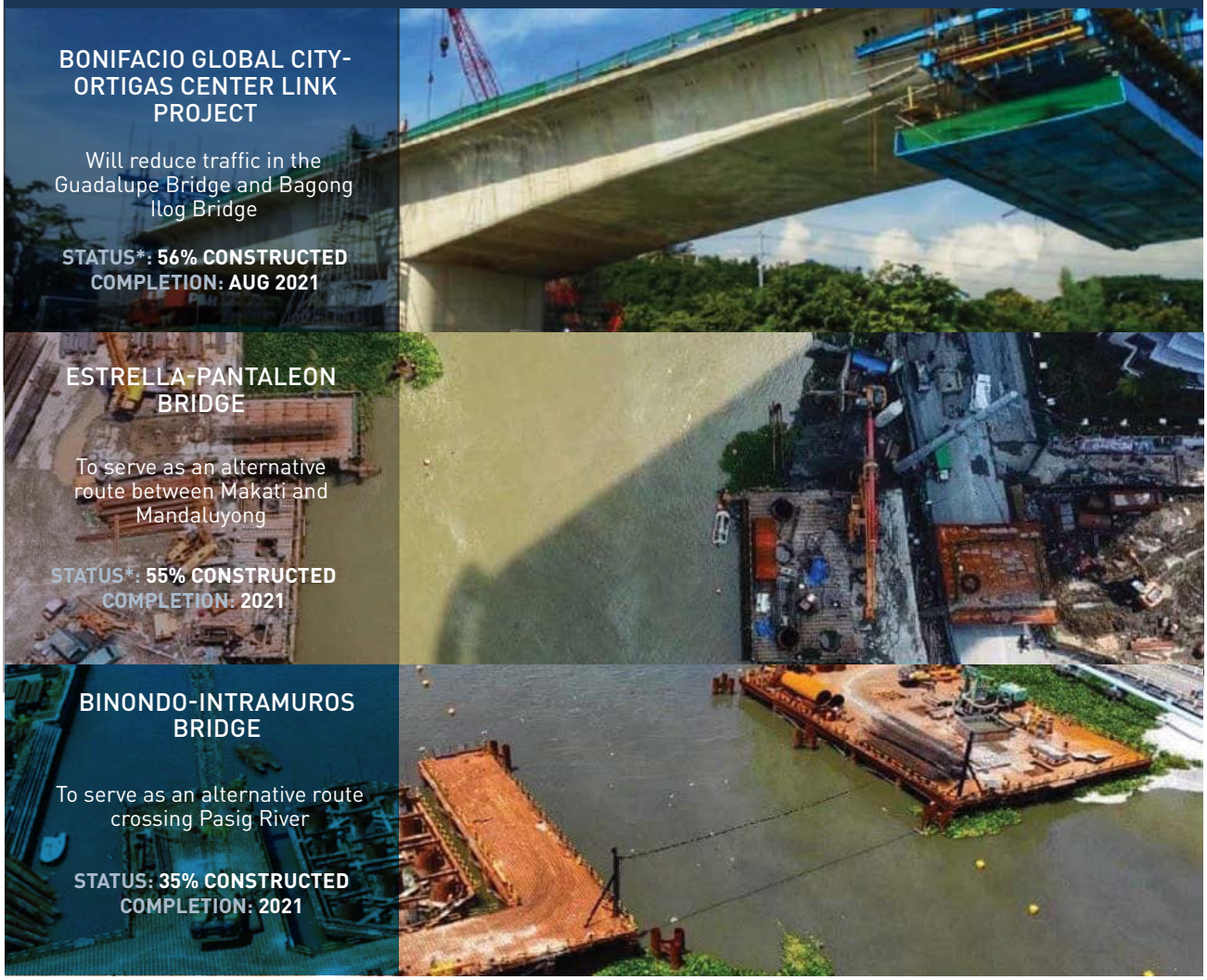
Easing Mobility in Davao and Cebu Cities. In Cebu and Davao Cities, two of the country's major cities outside of Metro Manila, we are implementing high-impact projects to ease mobility *(see Table 7.3).*

Table 7.3 **Proposed Projects to Ease Congestion in Metro Cebu and Metro Davao**

Projects	Description	Status (as of June 2020) and Target Completion
Metro Cebu Expressway	• Will reduce travel time between Danao City and Naga City, Cebu from three hours to one hour and 10 minutes	Status: 28.03% of Segment 3: Naga-Minglanilla constructed Completion: 2022 (Segment 3)
Davao City Coastal Road	• Will reduce travel time between Toril and Poblacion in Davao City from 45 minutes to 15 minutes • Alternative to the already congested Davao-Cotabato road	Status: 29% constructed Completion: 2023

Source: DPWH

Figure 7.6 **Bridges to Decongest EDSA**



*As of June 2020
Source and Photo Credit: DPWH

Enhancing Inclusive and Responsive Regional Growth

Most, if not all, Filipinos desire to find good-paying jobs in the metropolis to provide a comfortable life for their families. While it is true that employment opportunities and essential goods and services are more accessible in the cities, we are correcting this imbalance by harnessing the potential of the regions in bringing about better opportunities. Our goal is to create sustainable settlements, generate jobs, and integrate and enhance our efforts to support sustained and improved growth in the countryside.

Providing Quality Settlements outside Metro Manila[200]

Based on the study conducted by the then HUDCC and Philippine Statistical Research and Training Institute in

200 DHSUD, July 15, 2020; and DOST, July 17, 2020.

2017, the number of informal settler families (ISFs) in Metro Manila would reach 339,397 by 2022. Thus, there is an urgent need to relocate them to safe, sustainable, and resilient communities while upholding their dignity and well-being. Through my Administration's flagship BALAI program, we will create townships and build not just houses but communities with basic facilities such as schools, public markets, transport terminals, hospitals, police stations, business centers, and recreational facilities, in partnership with the LGUs and other stakeholders.

Through our partnership with LGUs, we have provided training and technical assistance to LGUs in the formulation, updating, and implementation of Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and zoning ordinances, among others *(see Table 7.4)*. This is to strengthen their capacity to implement inclusive and sustainable resettlement projects by identifying areas for urban growth and planned areas for human settlements.

Table 7.4 **Number of Training and Assistance Provided to LGUs in CLUP Formulation and Implementation**

Year	Annual Target	Actual Accomplishments
2016	1,000	1,947
2017	1,000	2,856
2018	1,000	1,909
2019	1,000	2,142

Source: DHSUD

Benjamin Village 8 in San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan.
Photo Credit: DHSUD

The DOST, together with the UP Planning and Development Research Foundation, Inc. (UP-PLANADES), is promoting the adoption of the DOST-UP-PLANADES New Growth Center Development Model. It is a template for planning on settlements development; identification of potential new growth areas in the country; and projection of housing requirements in terms of the total housing demand, spatial distribution, and financing needs. Select LGUs have been briefed on the development model and shall be trained online on its use on July 30, 2020.

Propelling Regional Development for Sustained Employment Creation

We shall facilitate the creation of sustainable jobs in the countryside to make migration to urban areas a preference rather than a need. To move this agenda forward, we are undertaking the following:

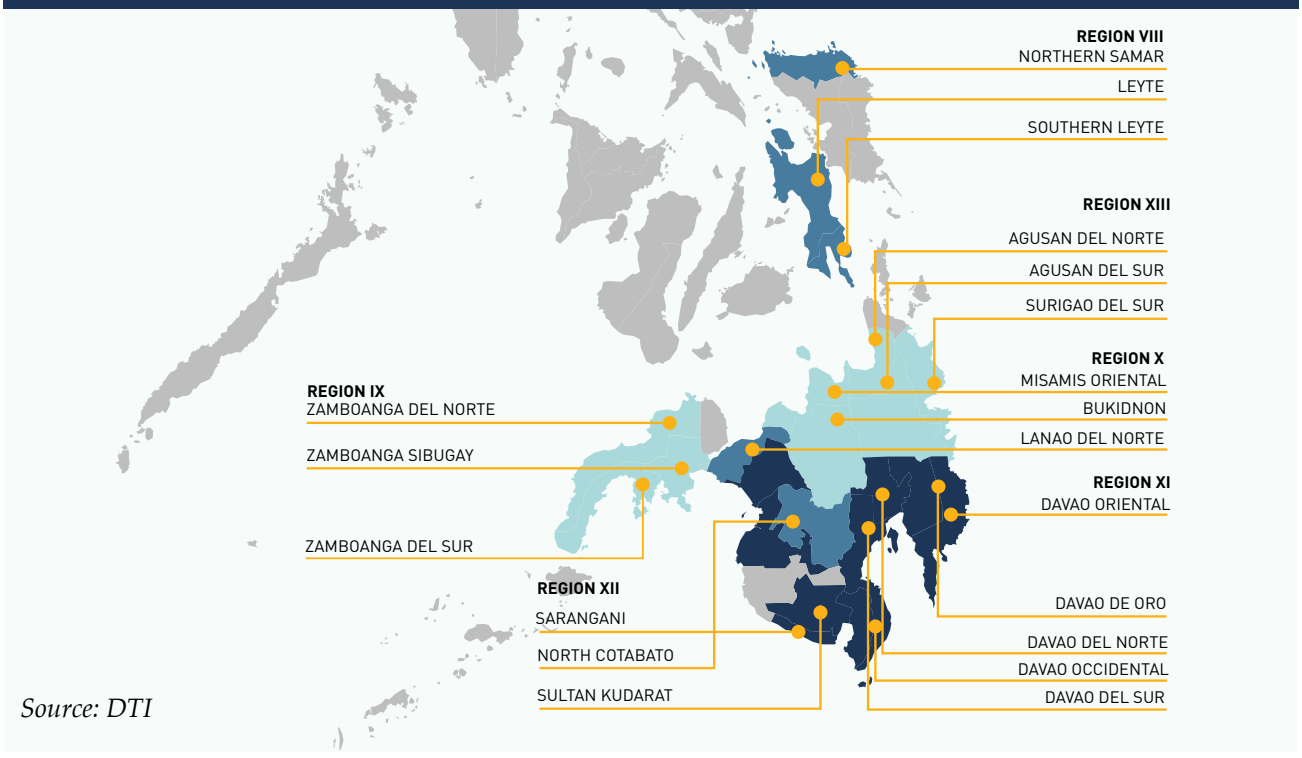
Agricultural and Value Chain Development.[201] The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the importance of agriculture. Aside from supplying our food requirements, most of our MSMEs are highly dependent on the raw materials provided by agriculture to keep their operations running.

With agriculture being the main employment provider in rural areas, it behooves upon the government to create more prospects and improve the well-being of farmers. Thus, we shall sustain efforts to modernize and develop the agricultural sector by providing financial support and other assistance to farmers, constructing farm-to-market roads, and improving irrigation systems, among others *(see Chapter 4 for the efforts to develop the agricultural sector).*

In May 2019, we also launched the Rural Agro-Enterprise Partnership for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID Growth) Project with the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). This initiative aims to support and increase the income of 78,000 farmers and 1,050 farmers' organizations and MSMEs engaged in cocoa, coffee, processed fruits and nuts, and coconut industries.

Interventions will include direct assistance to enterprises such as provision of conditional matching grants and rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads; and technical assistance to financial service providers. It is being implemented in 20 provinces from Regions VIII to CARAGA *(see Figure 7.7).* These provinces have been selected due to its high poverty incidence and growth potential in selected priority agriculture chains.

Figure 7.7 **RAPID Growth Project Location Map**



Source: DTI

201 DTI, July 16, 2020; and IFAD, RAPID Growth Project Report, July 10, 2017.

Revival of the Tourism Industry.[202] The tourism industry is vital to our economy. In 2019, the industry contributed 12.7 percent to the country's GDP and generated 5.71 million jobs or 13.5 percent of the country's total employment. It breaks my heart to see how an industry that has consistently been a source of national pride and livelihood is among the hardest hit by the pandemic.

To revive the industry, the DOT and DTI are encouraging local travels with the gradual easing of restrictions on movement and reopening of tourist destinations, in close coordination with the LGUs. However, we need to balance our desire for fun and recreation with the conscious effort to take care of our health and that of others.

Thus, as we slowly open our local borders, the DOT, together with other concerned agencies, LGUs, and stakeholders, will strictly enforce and integrate measures to ensure the safety of our travelers, workers, and communities. On June 18, 2020, the Board of Investments (BOI) approved the proposed amendments to the Modernization Policy and Specific Guidelines on Tourism under the 2017 Investment Priorities Plan. Effective June 27, 2020, tax incentives have become available for tourism enterprises that will modernize and upgrade their facilities in terms of safety and health standards in the new normal. The tax relief includes income tax holiday for three years and duty-free importation of capital equipment.

DOT Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat visits El Nido, Palawan (top photo) and Boracay Island with DENR Secretary Cimatu (bottom photo) to inspect the readiness of the two popular tourist destinations to reopen to visitors.
Photo Credit: DOT and PCOO

Establishment of New Special Economic Zones.[203] In June 2019, I issued AO no. 18 to expedite the development of special economic zones in rural areas and spur economic growth in the countryside. Since 2016, 73 new ecozones were proclaimed, bringing the total number of economic zones to 408. Of this number, 222 were developed outside Metro Manila, employing about 1.60 million workers.

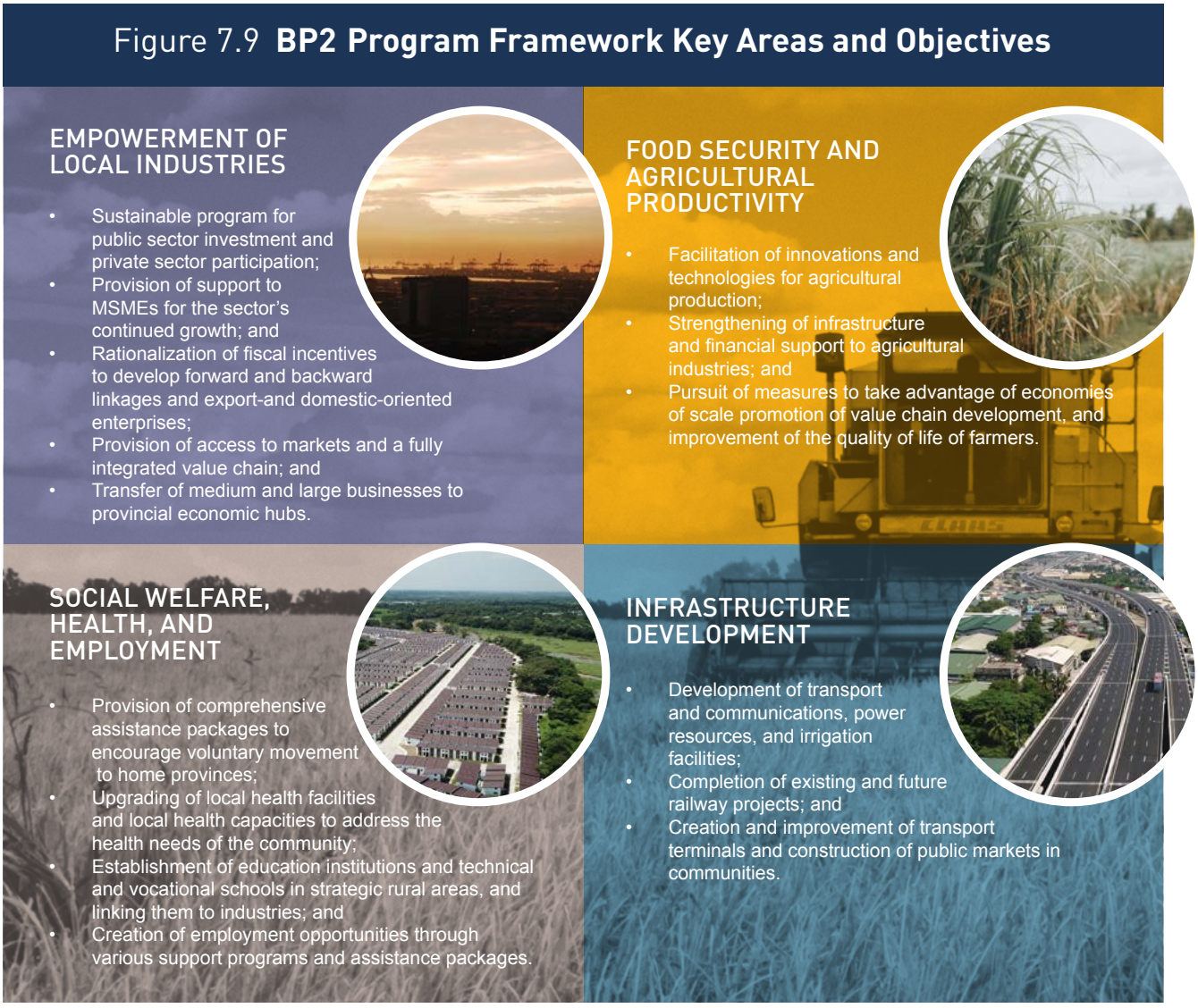
202 DTI, July 16, 2020; and DOT, July 20, 2020.
203 DTI, July 16, 2020; and AO no. 18, s. 2019.

Implementing the *Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa* (BP2) Program

To promote balanced urban and rural development, ensure rural prosperity, and complement initiatives towards attaining resilient and sustainable communities in the next normal, I issued in May 2020 EO no. 114,[204] which institutionalized the BP2 Program.

We also created the BP2 Council that would ensure the attainment of the policy objectives of the BP2 Program Framework, which is divided into four key areas: empowerment of local industries; food security and agricultural productivity; social welfare, health, and development; and infrastructure development *(see Figures 7.9 and 7.10).*

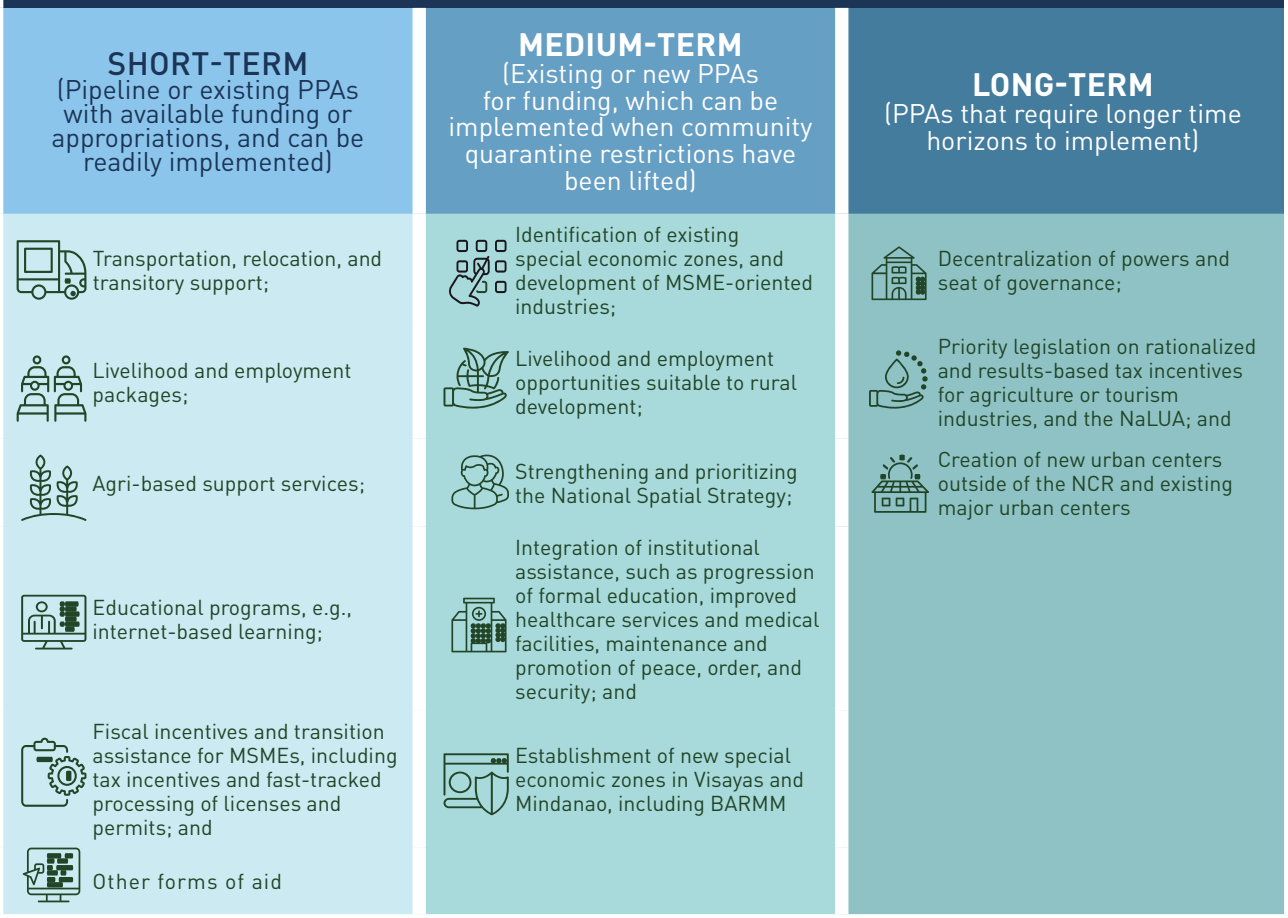
Figure 7.9 **BP2 Program Framework Key Areas and Objectives**



Source: EO no. 114, s. 2020

204 EO no. 114, s. 2019 entitled: "Institutionalizing the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program as a Pillar of Balanced Regional Development, Creating a Council Therefor, and for Other Purposes," signed on May 6, 2020.

Figure 7.10 **Progress Points for the Implementation of Pipeline or Existing Programs, Projects, or Activities (PPAs) under BP2**



Source: EO no. 114, s. 2020

While I recognize that the program's framework can still be enriched by the learnings from its early implementation, I look forward to the day when it can be fully institutionalized. We need to change mindsets and paradigms and think of the greater good for our country and the future generation of Filipinos.

With the program's long-term plans on various investments in infrastructure, agriculture, business, transportation and access to a responsive healthcare system, a whole-of-nation approach is imperative to ensure its successful implementation. I hope that Congress will ensure its sustained implementation in the long-term through the passage of relevant legislation.

Way Forward: Towards an Equitable and Sustainable Development for All

I stand by my commitment to aggressively pursue the equitable growth of our regions.

Moving forward, we will ensure the continued implementation of connectivity and mobility infrastructure. Against all odds, we are exerting our utmost effort to fulfill our commitment to realize high-impact infrastructure projects towards increased connectivity and enhanced mobility. We shall not waver on this commitment despite the shocks we encountered along the way. In the coming years and even beyond my Administration, we are anticipating more economic opportunities in all corners of our country as these projects progress to completion. These projects shall not only be our springboard to reach greater economic development, but shall also serve as means to disperse economic benefits to all corners of the country while at the same time pushing sustainability in urban centers, particularly Metro Manila, through decongestion. These projects are also crucial in bolstering our ability to mitigate the impact of disasters and ensuring a more resilient and safer Philippines.

Environmental protection and the responsible extraction, utilization, and equitable distribution of natural resources remain among my top non-negotiables. In this regard, I reiterate the urgent need for the passage of the National Land Use Act (NaLUA) to institutionalize a national land use policy that would provide a science-based approach to the rational allocation, development, and management of the country's land resources. It would help disperse economic and investment activities to the countryside through the proper planning of industrial zones, communities, environmental conservation, disaster resiliency, health and pandemic management, and other imperatives of sustainable and resilient development.

Economic activity follows where government centers are. Therefore, having regional government centers is a way of reducing risks in the metropolis, as it would disperse the population towards the regions. In a rapidly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world, the creation of super-regional centers and consequently transferring the seat of the national government to a more resilient site would not only ensure the survival and continuity of the national government in the event of a major disaster but also guarantee the uninterrupted delivery of public services to the people. In view of this, we aim to transform the present Metro Manila-centric governance model, which is highly vulnerable to disruptions caused by natural hazards and pandemics, into a resilient 21st century bureaucracy through the establishment of redundant government centers in more resilient sites across the archipelago. Doing so will greatly enhance the stability of governance and the continuity of public services.

Moving forward, we shall bring development to every corner of our nation to ensure that no one gets left behind in our pursuit of a comfortable life for all Filipinos.

"Yes, things will not be easy, [but] we Filipinos are tough. *Mas malakas ang Pilipino sa anumang hamon.* Now, we all must do what we can, and must, *para sa ating bayan."*

The President's statement, Talk to the People on COVID-19, March 24, 2020

"A Filipino is like a mythological bamboo who sways valiantly with the winds of misfortune only to rise unscathed when the tempest is over to meet again the warmth of the morning sun."
-Dr. Felipe Landa Jocano (1930-2013), an anthropologist and educator from the University of the Philippines. *Photo Credit: DOST*

Chapter
8

Ensuring the Filipino's Well-being and Resiliency

We shall face the next normal fully aware that disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change are intricately intertwined. According to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, COVID-19 emanated from the wild and that its occurrence is a manifestation that human health relates to the natural world.[205] This clearly reaffirms a resounding lesson that our treatment of mother nature inevitably comes back to us.

As the COVID-19 pandemic wrought immense global havoc, it has emphasized the critical importance of strengthening our healthcare system and according top priority to environmental protection, sustainability, and resilience. We need to move towards this direction in unison to uphold and protect the national well-being.

205 UN, May 19, 2020.

Strengthening the Health Sector

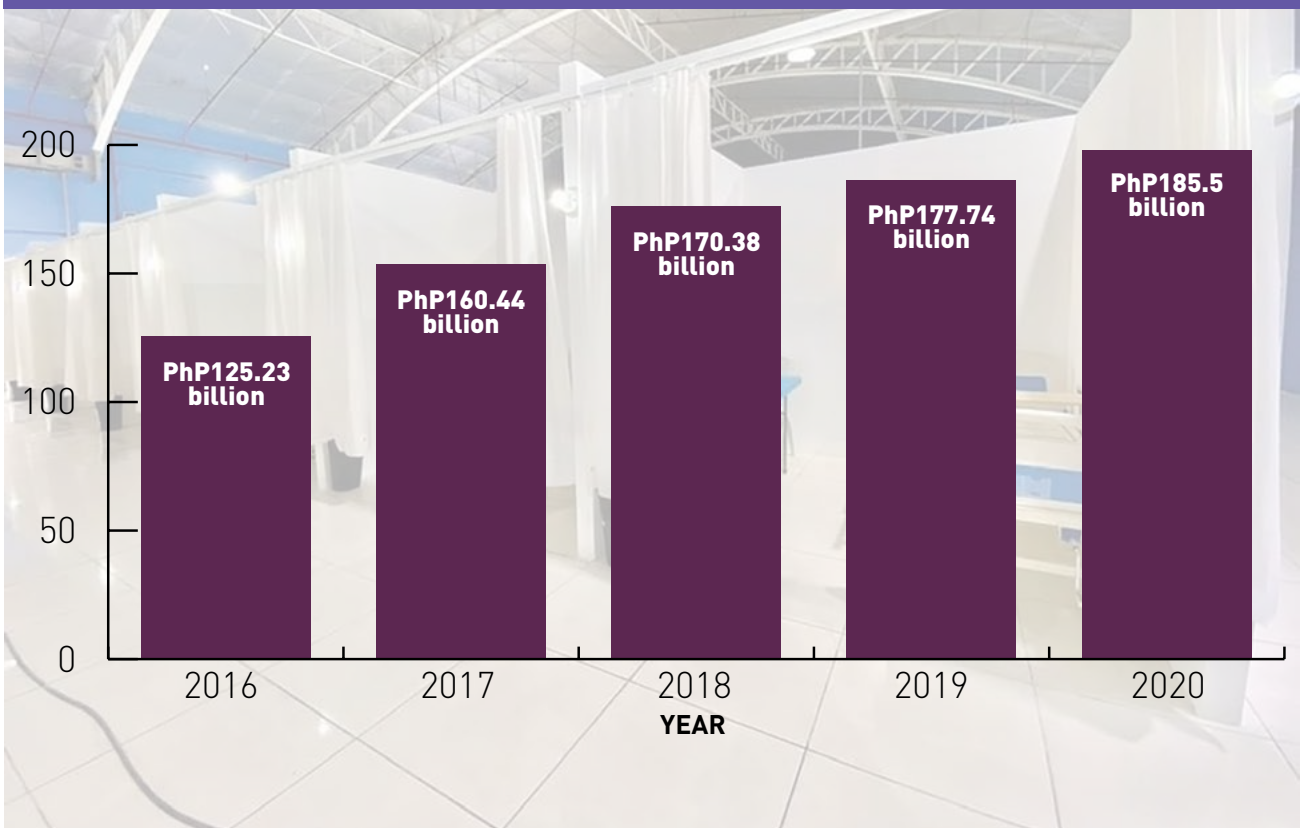
By the end of my term, I want the country to achieve meaningful health outcomes. These include longer life expectancy, lower maternal and infant mortality, and decreased prevalence of stunting among children, especially among the poorest sector of the society. We will have a responsive health system that makes Filipinos feel respected, valued, and empowered. Our experience with the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the urgent need to strengthen our country's healthcare system and ensure that every Filipino's health is protected.

Improvements in the Philippine Healthcare System

Prioritizing the Health Sector Budget[206]

Public health has always been among my top priorities. In addition to the 2020 health sector budget *(see Figure 8.1)*, the DOH received PhP48.23 billion to cover the funding requirements for the efficient implementation of RA no. 11469 or *Bayanihan to Heal as One Act*, specifically to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 8.1 **Health Sector Budget (2016 to 2020)**



206 DOH, July 17, 2020, DBM, July 19, 2020, and NEDA, July 14, 2020.

For FY 2021, the health sector budget shall again be prioritized to enable our healthcare system to effectively address the COVID-19 pandemic and similar disease outbreaks. Included in the budget are programs that will sustain our efforts to achieve the health outcomes set out in the National Objectives for Health 2017-2022 *(see Table 8.1)*. These are important in ensuring the holistic advancement of public health.

Table 8.1 **Health Outcomes in the National Objectives for Health (2017-2022)**

Health Outcomes Indicator	Baseline	Current Data	2022 Target
Average life expectancy in years	70 (2010-2015)	71 (2015-2020)	72
Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	111 (2015)	108 (2018)	To be determined
Infant mortality rate per 100,000 live births	23 (2013)	21 (2017)	15
Premature mortality attributed to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases per 1,000,000 population	466 (2015)	459 (2016)	367
Tuberculosis incidence per 100,000 population	434 (2016)	554 (2018)	510
Prevalence of stunting among under-five children in percentage	33.4 (2015)	30.3 (2018)	21.4

Source: DOH

Improving Healthcare Service Delivery

To improve the healthcare delivery system, we shall intensify the hiring and deployment of human resources for health, upgrade health facilities and equipment, and maximize the use of available technology.

Service Delivery. We will continue to strengthen the health system and support the LGUs in building their capacity to deliver health services. We shall provide both pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. We shall also build the LGUs' health system resilience and their capacities to prepare for and respond to public health emergencies, institutionalizing primary care, and catalyzing the transformation of the provincial-, city-, and municipal-wide health systems.

To further strengthen our capacity to respond to the pandemic, the proposed *Bayanihan to Recover as One Act* or *Bayanihan II*, allocates PhP10 billion for the procurement of testing kits. With the guidance of the DOH, the LGUs' experiences in responding to COVID-19 will help shape models for health systems integration and improve health outcomes.

Human Resource for Health. In 2021, we aim to increase access to healthcare services by continuously hiring and deploying more than 20,000 health professionals to augment the health workforce in the LGUs, particularly in far-flung and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. Physicians, nurses, medical technologists, midwives, dentists, and other health professionals will provide essential health services and strengthen disease surveillance in various areas of the country. Our physicians, who are graduates of select residency training in DOH hospitals, will be deployed in government hospitals and provincial or city health offices, which are in dire need of specialty services.

Healthcare Facilities and Equipment. Starting January 2021, we intend to implement 4,474 projects to establish and improve our Barangay Health Stations, Rural Health Units, Polyclinics, DOH and LGU hospitals, and other healthcare facilities. We shall also pursue the provision and/or repair of equipment and infrastructure of 2,556 Barangay Health Stations and Rural Health Units, and 537 LGU hospitals nationwide.

Use of Digital Innovation. The use of technology has provided our healthcare workers with alternative ways of delivering health services even to the remotest areas and most vulnerable populations in the country. We shall maximize the use of these to keep up with the demands under the next normal.

Among these innovations are the Digital Contact Tracing, which allows early detection of cases from those who may have been exposed to known cases; 24/7 Hotline, a full-scale health information and medical consultation platform that uses various communication channels; Electronic Health Information Systems, which eased collection and submission of health data and generation of critical health reports by public health authorities; and Telemedicine, which enabled patients to receive health services even while staying at home.

Ensuring Financial Risk Protection for Filipinos[207]

The passage of the UHC Act is very important to me as it ensured that all Filipinos would have access to a comprehensive set of health services through the accredited hospitals of the PhilHealth.

The DOH, in coordination with the PhilHealth, will pursue the implementation of the UHC Act, including the integration of health systems, universal access to primary care services, and strengthening population-based services such as surveillance systems, health promotion, and health emergency preparedness.

207 PhilHealth, July 17, 2020.

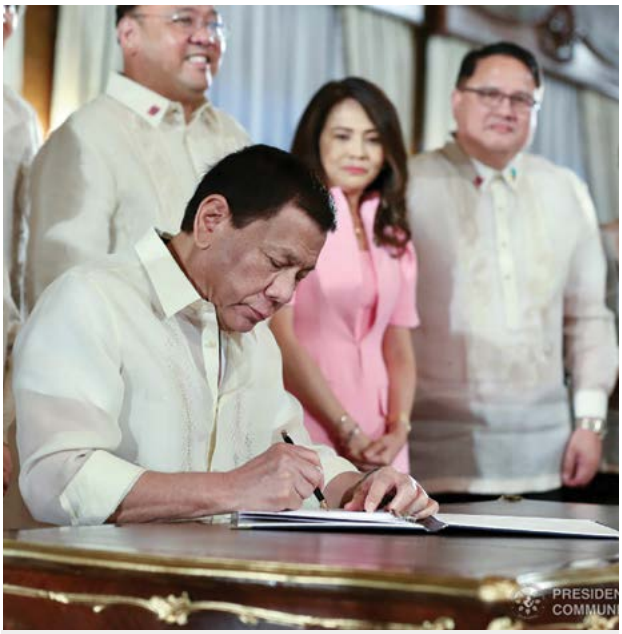
The UHC Act is expected to significantly lower the high out-of-pocket health expenditure, which was at 53.9 percent in 2018. As one of the strategic goals set in the National Objectives for Health 2017-2022, out-of-pocket health expenditure is targeted to be lowered to 50 percent. In the same vein, we shall continue to develop, implement, and improve the Case Rate Packages for COVID-19 and related diseases covered by the PhilHealth *(see Table 8.2)*.

Table 8.2 **The PhilHealth's Existing Case Rate Packages for COVID-19 and Related Diseases**

Packages	Amount in PhP/Benefit		Number of Beneficiaries* (as of July 16, 2020)
COVID-19 Community Isolation Benefit Package	PhP22,449 (Maximum reimbursement rate per claim)		12
Benefit Package for Testing	PhP3,409	All services for testing are procured and provided by the testing laboratory.	1,189
	PhP2,077	Test kits are donated to the testing laboratory.	2,829
	PhP901	Test kits are donated to the testing center; cost of running the laboratory and the PT-PCR machine for testing is included in the facility budget.	683
Benefit Package for Inpatient Care of Probable and Confirmed COVID-19 Cases**	PhP43,997	Mild pneumonia in the elderly or with comorbidities	613
	PhP143,267	Moderate pneumonia	806
	PhP333,519	Severe pneumonia	301
	PhP786,384	Critical pneumonia	138
Full Financial Risk Protection for Filipino Health Workers and Patient against COVID-19	Health workers, regardless of employment status, confined for COVID-19 is eligible for the COVID-19 benefits for inpatient case management with no co-payment, whether in public or private facility		2,688***

*Claims received
**No co-payment from the patient for direct healthcare service, but can have co-payments for amenities (e.g., Suite room accommodation).
***Full financial risk protection for non-healthcare workers (before April 15, 2020 admission) and health workers. Includes 369 healthcare workers.

Source: PhilHealth



The President signs the UHC Act on February 20, 2019 in the presence of Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque Jr. (then *Kabayan* Representative), Quezon Province 4th District Representative Angelina Tan, and a PhilHealth official.
Photo Credit: PCOO

Investments in Health Research and Development (R&D)[208]

Alongside our health-related investments, we shall maximize the power of R&D and innovation to further improve our healthcare system in the next normal. Our health R&D budget in 2020 was PhP856 million and this is proposed to be increased to PhP1.11 billion in 2021. For our proposed 2021 health R&D budget, PhP66 million will be allocated for the country's participation in the WHO's Solidarity Trial that aims to develop a vaccine against COVID-19.

We shall also pursue the discovery and development of drugs, particularly those coming from natural sources, as identified priority areas under the National Unified Health Research Agenda 2017-2022. At the helm of drug discovery and development is the *Tuklas Lunas* Program that leverages the country's rich biodiversity and local expertise to produce world-class and affordable medicines for every Filipino. This Program presently involves 28 implementing agencies that include HEIs and industry partners.

Creation of a Disease Prevention and Control Body[209]

Over the years, we have seen how global health risks claimed lives and massively disrupted the growth and development of countries. Aside from the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV 2), which caused the COVID-19 pandemic, various disease-causing agents are highly capable of causing disease outbreaks, including the Ebola virus and Zika virus.

Domestically, we are beset with emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. Despite efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals against tuberculosis, our country has the fourth highest number of new tuberculosis cases annually worldwide. We also saw the re-emergence of polio in 2019, a disease we already eradicated 19 years ago, thereby prompting us to declare a polio outbreak in the same year.

We recognize that an effective and efficient response to public health emergencies

208 DOST, July 20, 2020 and DBM, July 17, 2020.
209 DOH, July 16, 2020.

Over the years, these health R&D projects resulted in life-changing and life-saving innovations. Some of the most notable results of collaborative R&D are as follows:

- **Ginhawa (ReliefVent)**, a portable and compact ventilator, benefiting intensive care units, primary care units, and patients with respiratory failure;

- **RxBox,** a biomedical device capable of transmitting readings through built-in medical sensors (e.g., blood pressure monitor, electrocardiogram, temperature, pulse oximeter, maternal tocometer, fetal heart rate monitor) from remote sites to medical specialists in urban areas;

- **Telepresence Terminals,** one of the Surgical Innovation and Biotechnology (SIBOL) COVID response projects that helped isolated COVID-patients to remotely communicate with the healthcare workers of the Philippine General Hospital, and with their loved ones;

- **Feasibility Analysis of Syndromic Surveillance using Spatio-Temporal Epidemiological Modeler for Early Detection of Diseases (FASSSTER)**, a web and mobile-based application that can create predictive models and visualize possible scenarios of outbreaks (e.g., Dengue, Typhoid Fever, Measles) at specified time periods. It recently underwent enhancement to generate predictive models to forecast future numbers related to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

- **TanodCOVID**, an SMS-based self-screening system that serves as a companion application of FASSSTER allowing citizens to report 11 COVID-19 related symptoms to their local health authorities to help the LGUs identify COVID-19 hotspots.

Sources: PIA & DOST

requires a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, and whole-of-systems approach. I therefore urge Congress to pass a bill creating a disease prevention and control body, which shall be the primary government instrumentality to design systems for forecasting, prevention, monitoring, and controlling emerging and re-emerging communicable diseases and threats both of national and international importance. This shall also ensure operational readiness for disease surveillance, strengthen epidemiologic reporting systems, increase staffing and technical capacity, and further strengthen laboratory capacity, from the national down to the local levels.

Our existing healthcare system needs to be urgently reinvigorated for it to effectively address these health concerns. As the world becomes smaller and as more and more Filipinos live and work abroad, our exposure to global health risks increases. These necessitate the creation of a body that has the authority and resources to lead the country in combating diseases, local outbreaks, and pandemics.

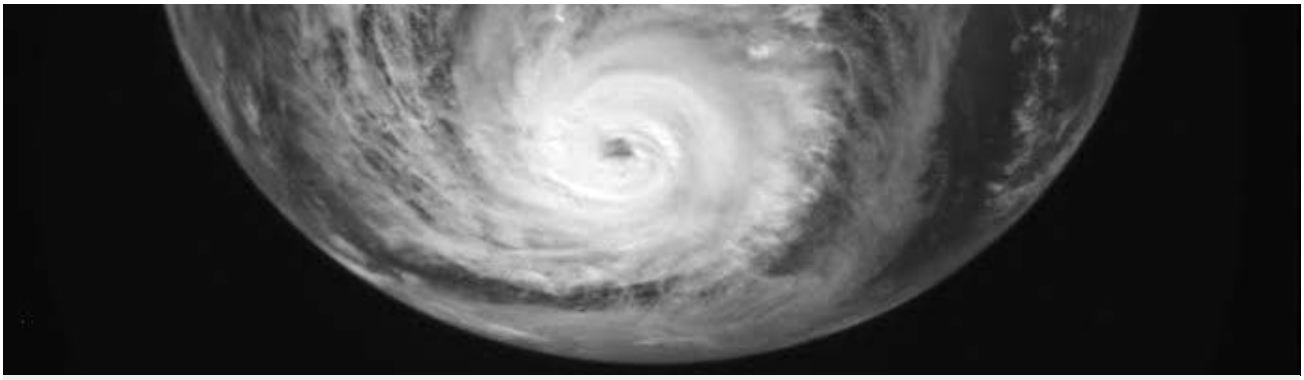
The immense and far-reaching impact of pandemics like that of COVID-19 has reminded us of the most primordial yet often disregarded principle on the primacy of life. Regrettably, the COVID-19 pandemic may not be the last. It may only be a prelude to other more severe and destructive diseases.We need to prepare and bolster our healthcare

system now for us to thrive under a better normal. With the innate resilience of the Filipino people, I am confident that we shall emerge stronger, prevail over this contagion, and transform our health system to be able to address current and future threats to ensure the health, well-being, and security of every Filipino.

Disease outbreaks are widely known to be closely linked to climate change and natural disasters. In 1997, a large area of rainforest in southeast Asia was burned to make way for palm oil plantations. Deforestation, forest fires, and drought are believed to have forced hundreds of fruit bats from their natural habitats towards fruit orchards near pig farms. These led to the emergence of the Nipah virus, which spilled over from infected bats to pigs, and from pigs to pig farmers. Over the next two years, the disease would kill more than 100 people. This should have served as a warning.[210]

Given this, we shall pursue efforts to address climate change and natural disasters as part of our holistic response to ensure the well-being and resilience of our countrymen.

Mitigating the Impact of Natural Hazards



Typhoon Tisoy hovering over the Philippines as captured from space by the Philippine Micro-Satellite, Diwata 2. Typhoon Tisoy struck the country in December 2019.
Photo Credit: PHL-Microsat

The 21st Century is marked by drastic and rapid changes in the world's climate – one of the reasons why natural disasters have become increasingly catastrophic, frequent, and widespread in recent years. The Philippines, which is situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire and Pacific Typhoon Belt, has an alarming global warming projection.

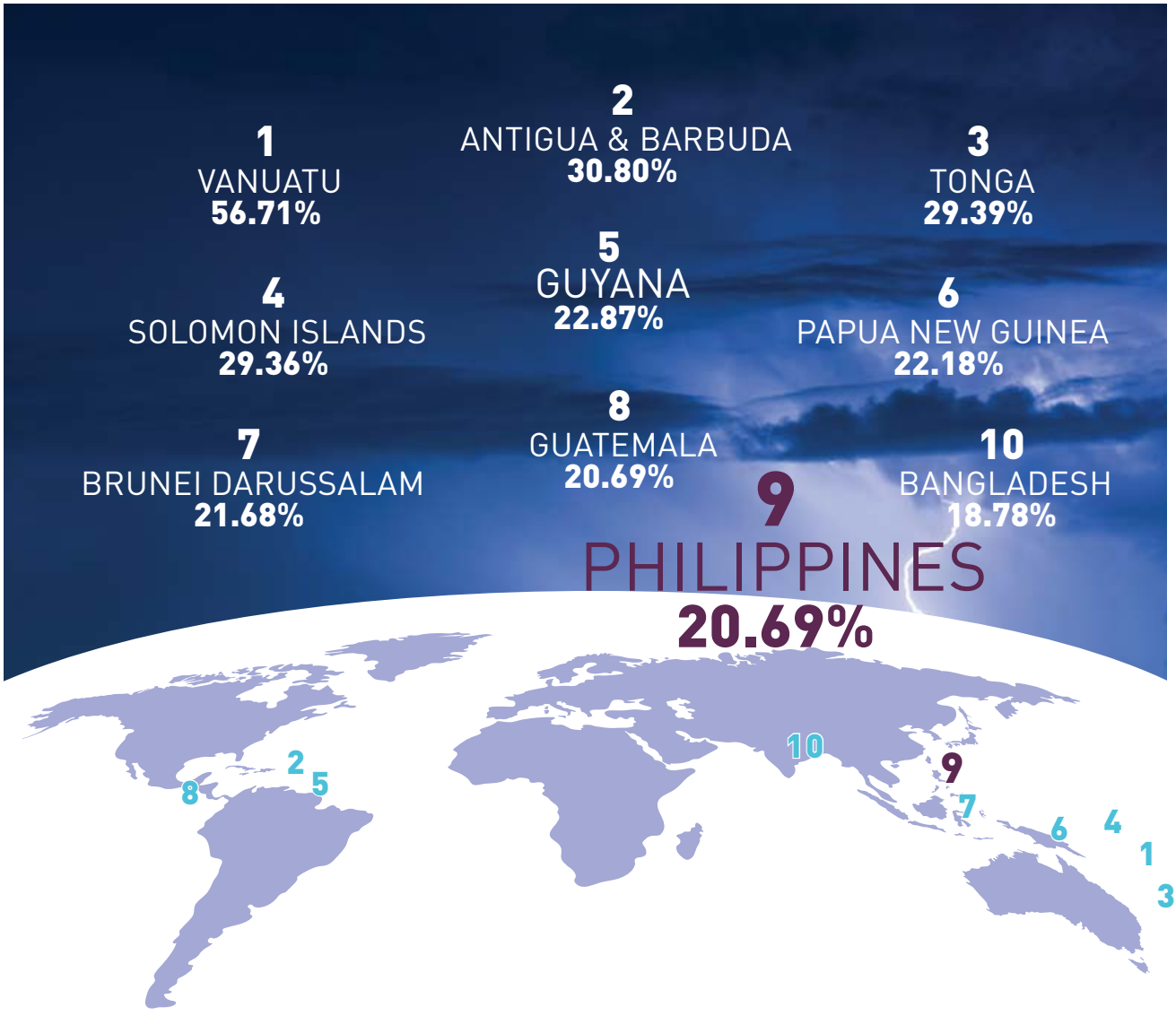
The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) projects that temperatures in the country will rise by 0.9°C to 1.9°C in

210 The WWF, WHO, and the UN as cited in The Guardian UK, June 17, 2020.

2050 and by 1.3°C to 2.5°C in 2099, which could lead to the occurrence of even stronger typhoons and more destructive floods. Moreover, the Greater Metro Manila Area (GMMA), which is the country's economic and political center, is threatened by a major earthquake due to the imminent movement of the West Valley Fault (WVF). All of these define our natural environment in the next normal.[211]

We have improved from being the third riskiest country due to extreme weather events from 2015-2018 to the ninth riskiest from among 180 countries in 2019 *(see Figure 8.2)*. This is a result of our persistent and conscious efforts

Figure 8.2 **Top 10 Countries with the Highest Risk Due to Extreme Climate Events**



Source: World Risk Report, 2019

211 DOST, July 16, 2020.

to reduce our exposure to natural hazards and vulnerability from their impact. While this is a significant and welcome development, the cycle of destruction and reconstruction arising from natural disasters has pervaded, continually claimed lives, and affected our growth and development.[212]

Recently, our country faced several disasters that challenged our resilience as a nation. Among these were the 13 tropical cyclones[213] that ravaged the country from July 2019 to June 2020, spate of earthquakes, including those that shook Mindanao,[214] and the Taal Volcano eruption in January 2020 *(see Figure 8.3)*.

In these dire times, we responded to the needs of our countrymen with dispatch through a whole-of-society approach. Aside from the deployment of personnel for Search, Rescue, and

Figure 8.3 **Salient Facts on Recent Disasters that Affected the Philippines**

PARTICULARS	13 TROPICAL CYCLONES JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020	EARTHQUAKES JULY - DECEMBER 2019	TAAL VOLCANO ERUPTION JANUARY 2020
AFFECTED FAMILIES	1.49 million	168,856	191,952
COST OF DAMAGES *Infrastructure and Agriculture*	PhP11.93 billion	PhP335.15 million	PhP3.41 billion
CASUALTIES	69 Dead; 862 Injured; 19 Missing	52 Dead; 1,110 Injured; 12 Missing	-

Source: DND-OCD

212 DND-OCD, July 17, 2020.

213 These 13 tropical cyclones were: (1) Egay; (2) Falcon; (3) Hannah; (4) Ineng; (5) Jenny; (6) Marilyn; (7) Nimfa; (8) Quiel; (9) Ramon; (10) Tisoy; (11) Ursula; (12) Ambo; and (13) Butchoy. (Source: DND-OCD, July 17, 2020).

214 Magnitude 5.4 and 5.9 earthquakes in Itbayat, Batanes on July 27, 2019; Magnitude 5.5 earthquake in Carrascal, Surigao del Sur on July 13, 2019; Series of earthquakes (e.g., 6.6 Magnitude) in Tulunan, North Cotabato in October 2019; Magnitude 5.9 earthquake in Kadingilan, Bukidnon on November 18, 2019; and, Magnitude 6.9 earthquake in Matanao, Davao del Sur on December 15, 2019 (Source: DND-OCD, July 17, 2020).

Retrieval Operations, we provided over PhP700 million worth of relief assistance to the victims of typhoons which hit the country since July 2019; various earthquakes, including those in Mindanao; and the Taal Volcano eruption. This included food and non-food items such as hygiene and sanitation kits, medicines, folding beds, clothes, school supplies, and, among others. To help the poor get back on their feet while at the same time bolstering the resilience of communities, we provided PhP1.3 billion worth of assistance to almost half a million poor individuals living in hazard-prone areas nationwide under the Risk Resiliency Program through Cash-for-Work activities.[215]

Ensuring Earthquake Resiliency of the Greater Metro Manila Area (GMMA).[216] I issued EO no. 52 on May 8, 2018 creating the Program Management Office (PMO) Earthquake Resiliency Group (ERG) to help ensure unity of direction within government prioritizing ten focus points and/or lifelines for resilience *(see Figure 8.4)*.

I am pleased that the PMO-ERG has been working to help enhance the preparedness of the GMMA, which is home to almost 26 million people and host to about two-thirds of the nation's GDP, to the "Big One." Consistent with my guidance to strengthen collaboration among government

Cabinet and other officials in action during the Cabinet-level Simulation Exercise (SIMEX):
1. **(Top left photo)** *From left to right* - DOH Secretary Duque, DPWH Secretary Villar, Cabinet Secretary Nograles, DFA Secretary Locsin, DND Secretary and NDRRMC Chair Lorenzana, DND-OCD Administrator Jalad, DILG Secretary Año, DSWD Secretary Bautista, and DENR Secretary and CCAM-DRR Cluster Chair Cimatu;
2. **(Top right photo)** *From left to right* - MMDA Chairperson Danilo Lim, DICT Secretary Honasan, PCOO Secretary Andanar, and DOST-PHIVOLCS Undersecretary Renato Solidum Jr.;
3. **(Bottom left photo)** *From left to right* - Acting PMS Head Ferdinand Cui Jr., TESDA Secretary Lapeña, and DTI Secretary Lopez; and
4. **(Bottom right photo)** *From left to right* - DPWH Secretary Villar, Cabinet Secretary Nograles, DFA Secretary Locsin, and DND Secretary Lorenzana.

Photo Credit: DND-OCD and PMS

215 DND-OCD, July 17, 2020.
216 DND-OCD, July 17, 2020.

agencies for disaster response, a Cabinet-level SIMEX was held on October 16, 2019 at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) Operations Center in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The endeavor was historic for the Philippines and the ASEAN region having been the first SIMEX involving Cabinet-level officials as its key players. The SIMEX focused on a magnitude 7.2 earthquake scenario generated by the WVF that is projected to devastate Metro Manila,

DENR Secretary and CCAM-DRR Cluster Chair Cimatu raising a point during the Cabinet-level SIMEX.
Photo Credit: PMS

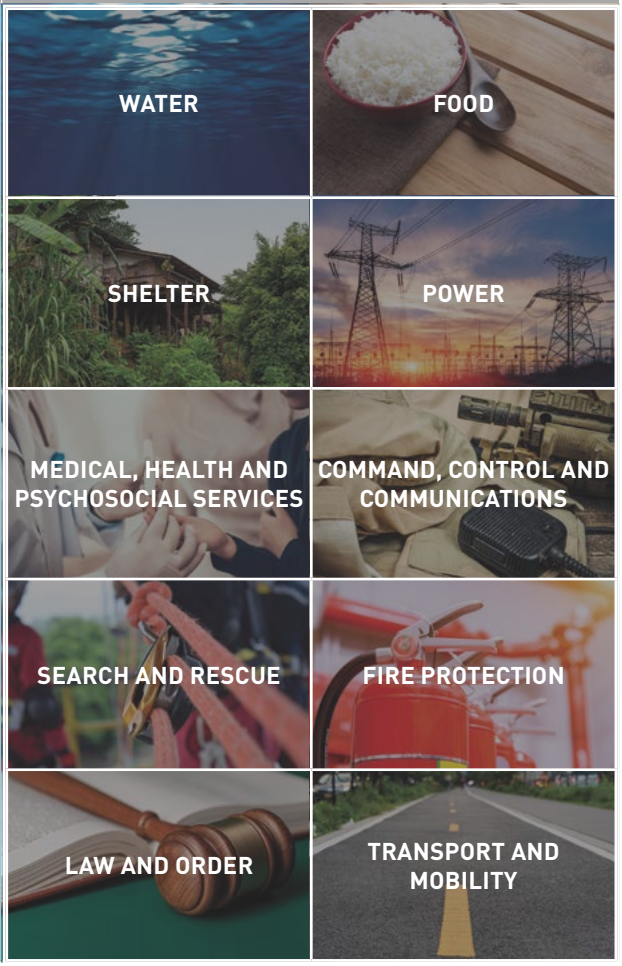
Figure 8.4 **Ten Focus Points for Resilience**

Multi-level Preparation	Ten Focus Points

NATIONAL
- Massive Retrofitting of Public and Private Infrastructure
- Government and Business Continuity Plan
- Training and Awareness Raising

COMMUNITY
- Community Advocacy and Mobilization
  - » Responders and Logistics
  - » Emergency medical technicians
  - » Contingency plans
  - » Equipment prepositioning
  - » Volunteer groups

HOUSEHOLD
- Individual or Family Preparedness
  - » Water and food
  - » Solar energy
  - » Emergency bags



Source: EO no. 52, s. 2018

CALABARZON (Region IV-A), and Central Luzon (Region III). The exercise brought out the key decision points for top policy makers as well as the areas for improvement in our disaster resiliency planning and execution.

Further, the NDRRMC initiated the conduct of the Greater Metro Manila Earthquake Impact Reduction Study (GMMEIRS) to better understand the GMMA's overall risk to earthquakes. We shall pursue the conduct of the quarterly Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drills to keep the general public aware of the proper and safe evacuation procedures during an earthquake.

We shall also work towards establishing redundant Government Command and Control Centers at the New Clark City in Tarlac, Brig. Gen. Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu, and Lumbia Airport in Cagayan de Oro City. These centers shall carry out communications, warning signals, emergency transportation, evacuation, rescue, health and rehabilitation, public education, and other auxiliary services to ensure the protection and welfare of the people during disasters and emergencies. These centers shall also ensure public service continuity post-disaster.

To bolster our preparedness and response during earthquakes, we have mapped the safe and open spaces (SOS) and critical lifeline facilities in Metro Manila such as medical facilities and those related to water, food, shelter, power, and security. We shall ensure that these maps are distributed to concerned National Government Agencies (NGAs) and the 17 LGUs in the NCR. I strongly urge the LGUs to understand and appreciate the importance of these maps and seriously consider these into your respective disaster preparedness and response and in development planning.

Bolstering Resiliency Initiatives. I acknowledge that to strengthen the resilience of communities, Filipinos should be empowered to survive and swiftly bounce back after disasters. Under our Evacuation Center Development Program, PhP7.2 billion was allocated from 2016 to 2019 for the construction of 197 evacuation centers nationwide. We have completed 129 evacuation centers, while 68 evacuation centers are ongoing construction.[217]

After the Taal Volcano eruption, a vast number of affected Filipinos needed support to get back on their feet and restart their lives anew in a safer location. Thus, we shall endeavor to provide them with resilient housing as we could not compromise their safety in their previous dwelling places within the immediate proximity of the volcano. We have identified 2,788 internally displaced families as beneficiaries of resilient housing units under various projects. Our government agencies have also devised the comprehensive guidelines for the awarding of these housing units.[218]

In 2019, the government identified relocation sites and targeted the

217 DPWH, July 16, 2020.
218 DHSUD, July 17, 2020.

construction of an initial 2,000 housing units in the Bicol region for families affected by Typhoon Tisoy. As part of our efforts to provide these families with housing units, site inspections have been conducted to create resilient communities in Albay.[219]

To prevent further harm on our people when a disaster strikes, I have ordered the continued construction of halfway houses for the communities in vulnerable areas facing the Pacific Ocean stretching from Cagayan to Northern Mindanao. These halfway houses shall serve as places of refuge in times disasters. Our agencies have coordinated with concerned LGUs to identify suitable areas for the construction of halfway houses and prepared the design of the halfway house.[220]

To help ensure that our farmers are able to cope with the impact of disasters, we released around PhP3.5 billion worth of insurance to 2.4 million farmers covering 1.92 million hectares of rice, corn and high-value crops, non-crop agricultural assets, credit, and life term insurance.[221]

Investments in scientific tools and capacity building of our disaster preparedness and mitigation frontliners are vital in ensuring timely, accurate, and effective disaster preparation and response.

To help bolster our capacities to prepare and mitigate the impacts of typhoons and flooding, we installed additional Doppler Radars, High Frequency Doppler Radars (HFDR), and Flood Forecasting and Warning Systems (FFWS) bringing

The Doppler Radar in Iloilo.
Photo Credit: DOST

the country's total Doppler Radars to 17, HFDRs to 24, and FFWS to 13 as of June 30, 2020. These shall be augmented by the ongoing establishment of five FFWS River Centers in the river basins of Abulog, Agusan, Mindanao, Tagoloan, and Aklan, and five FFWS in the river basins in Abulog, Ilog-Hilabangan, Agusan, Mindanao, and Aklan.[222]

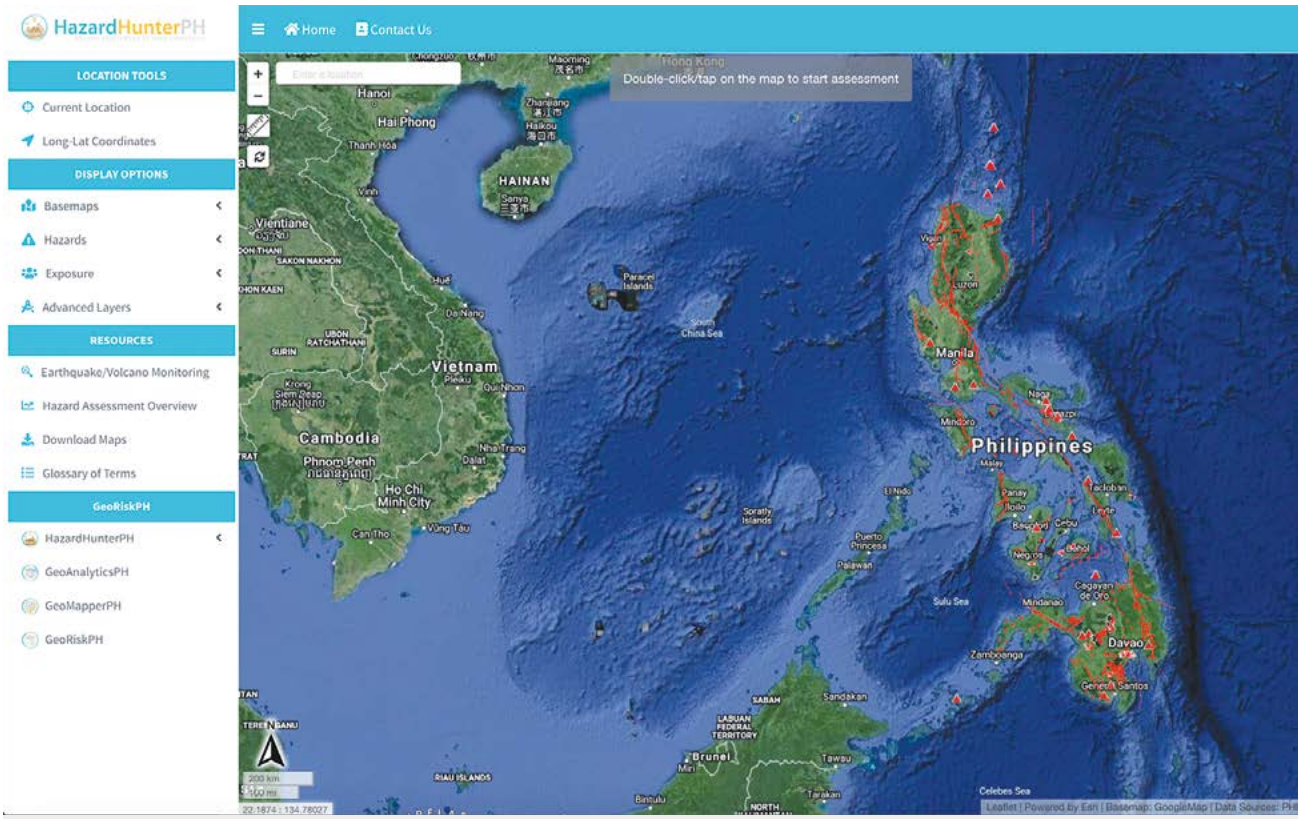
To improve our capability to monitor earthquakes, we continuously expanded the Philippine Seismic Network through the commissioning of additional satellite telemetered seismic stations. From 98 seismic stations in 2017, we now have 104 seismic stations nationwide. These stations shall help us monitor small earthquakes with magnitude less than three, which are essential in predicting possible sites of bigger and damaging earthquakes.[223]

To address the lack of integrated information needed for an effective climate and disaster risk assessment,

219 DHSUD, July 17, 2020.
220 DHSUD, July 17, 2020.
221 CCAM-DRR Cluster, June 30, 2020.
222 DOST, July 16, 2020..
223 DOST, July 16, 2020.

the DOST, under the leadership of Secretary dela Peña and Undersecretary Renato Solidum Jr., developed the Geospatial Information Management and Analysis Project for Hazards and Risk Assessment in the Philippines (GeoRiskPH). The Philippine government has adopted GeoRiskPH as its risk assessment tool. It systematizes data from various sources into one platform and provides essential tools for disaster risk management. The most publicly accessed tool of the GeoRiskPH Platform is the web-based HazardHunterPH application, which generates in a few clicks, accurate hazard assessment report for seismic, volcanic, and hydrometeorological hazards. HazardHunterPH has provided property owners, buyers, land developers, and planners real-time and free-of-charge hazard assessment reports. Another platform is the GeoAnalyticsPH, which can generate maps and analytics to maximize smart and efficient decision- and policy-making. This application could be used in the smart implementation of infrastructure projects, and development planning.[224]

Recognizing the importance of fast and seamless information dissemination during disasters, we launched the Government Emergency Communication System-Mobile Operation Vehicle for Emergency (GECS-MOVE). GECS-MOVE is a rapid deployable emergency communications



Screenshot of HazardHunterPH.
Source: https://hazardhunter.georisk.gov.ph/map

224 DOST, July 16, 2020.

system that aims to provide ICT-enabled support to disaster-stricken areas in the country. In 2019, the Prototype MOVE set was field tested and deployed in Davao City. Currently, there are five additional GECS-MOVE sets that would be deployed in NCR, Clark, Batangas, Cebu, and Cagayan de Oro by the end of 2020.[225]

Effective and responsive disaster risk reduction and management rely heavily on our first responders – the LGUs. That is why we prioritized the LGUs in implementing capacity building initiatives. Among these is the training to improve the risk-informed planning and risk vulnerability assessment covering 207 local government field officers nationwide. This training prioritized those in the eastern seaboard and major river basins. Another training was on community-based disaster risk reduction and management and quality assurance system for Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan. This training was attended by 513 LGUs and 168 youth leaders. These capacity building initiatives shall help LGUs maximize technology for their respective decision-making.[226]

Ensuring Disaster Resilience of the Whole Nation

While our country has a disaster risk reduction and management system in place, we could still do so much better. For three years now, I have been calling for the passage of the Administration version of the Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR) Bill, a critical and long overdue institutional reform to

Sample of a deployed GECS-MOVE.
Photo Credit: DICT

protect and uphold the Filipino people's Constitutional rights to life and property.

A council type set-up is a thing of the past and no longer attuned to the demands of the next normal in the 21st Century. In times of disasters, we do not have the luxury of time to build consensus for decisions because precious Filipino lives are at stake. We need a system that allows for unity of command and ensures a science-based approach to prevention, preparedness, and response. Alongside this, we need an out-of-the-box procurement system that is responsive to the nation's needs in times of disasters and beyond.

We need the DDR under a full-time Cabinet-level official who shall have the authority to take the lead role for advancing the nation's disaster resiliency and managing the effects of climate change.

Now more than ever, we need to build a Philippines with a robust foundation that can withstand and rise above the tempest of the times. I can no longer allow natural

225 DICT, July 17, 2020.
226 CCAM-DRR Cluster, June 30, 2020.

disasters to persistently pull down many of our countrymen to poverty, claim the lives of family members, and hamper our development as a nation. We should learn from and rise above the disasters that ravaged the country from Typhoon Ondoy in 2009; Typhoon Sendong in 2011; Typhoon Pablo in 2012; Super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013; Mayon Volcano eruption in 2018; Mindanao earthquakes in 2019; and Taal Volcano eruption in January 2020.

The cycle of destruction and reconstruction from natural disasters must stop. The Filipinos' innate resilience needs to manifest in our institutions and systems. Once again, I strongly urge Congress to pass the Administration version of the DDR Bill as soon as possible. This shall bolster the country's resilience and help us achieve our collective aspiration and pursuits for growth and development that, in turn, shall also ensure the well-being of the Filipinos towards a comfortable life. Alongside our efforts to empower communities to face, cope, and rise above natural disasters, we shall also intensify efforts to address the drivers of natural disasters such as environmental degradation.

Protecting the Environment and Advancing Sustainable Development

Palawan, the best island in the world according to renowned travel publication, Travel + Leisure in 2020.
Source and Photo Credit: DOT

Over the years, the race among countries towards economic development and prosperity has caused the unabated and uncontrolled extraction and consumption of natural resources, which resulted in environmental degradation. While many of our people depend heavily on the country's natural resources for survival, livelihood, and development, one significant cause of natural disasters is environmental degradation, which also leads to less income and renders the people vulnerable to natural disasters.

Environmental protection remains among my top non-negotiables. As mere stewards of the environment, it

behooves upon us to safeguard and ultilize it responsibly, as this will ultimately redound to protecting and ensuring the well-being of the greatest number of Filipinos today and in the future.

Continued Rehabilitation of Boracay Island[227]

In 2018, I issued Proclamation no. 475 declaring a State of Calamity in Boracay Island due to environmental degredation, which was caused by accumulated neglect and greed over the years. The Island's continued decay had posed serious threats to the health of its residents, workers, and tourists. This compelled me to close the Island for six months from April 26 to October 25, 2018 to make way for its much-needed rehabilitation.

Two years after its closure, Boracay Island has epitomized the Administration's unwavering resolve and political will to safeguard the environment. We have been witnesses to the remarkable reemergence of the Island from being a cesspool to one of the top, if not the top, tourist destinations in the world that all Filipinos can be truly proud of.

As a result of the concerted efforts of the government through the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), in cooperation with the private sector and the citizens, we were able to implement various high-impact developmental initiatives that helped improve the capacity of Boracay Island and its people for the influx of local and foreign tourists alike *(see Figure 8.5)*.

To sustain the Island's rehabilitation towards a productive, inclusive, and climate-resilient economy, I issued EO no. 115, s. 2020, extending the term of the BIATF. The extension allowed the completion of critical projects under the Boracay Action Plan that shall further cement Boracay Island's footing in the global tourism industry, while also safeguarding the environment and promoting the well-being of the people, particularly the Island's inhabitants.

As a more durable reform to ensure that future generations will enjoy the grandeur of Boracay Island, I proposed to Congress the creation of a Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA). The BIDA shall continuously manage the rehabilitation and promote the sustainable development of Boracay Island. Ultimately, its task is to ensure that the gains realized from the rehabilitation are continued towards the development of the island.

Pursued Manila Bay Rehabilitation[228]

The Supreme Court issued a mandamus in 2008 compelling the government to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay, and restore and maintain its waters to make it fit for swimming, skin-diving, and other forms of contact recreation. After two administrations, the mandamus was seemingly ignored as evidenced by the hazardous levels of pollutants and the piles of household and industrial waste in the Bay and its tributaries.

Our Administration acted on the mandamus and declared the start of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation at the

227 DENR, July 17, 2020.
228 DENR, July 17, 2020.

Baywalk in Manila on January 27, 2019 where over 10,000 people from various sectors participated, indicating an outpouring of public support.

After more than two years, our efforts resulted in the improvement of the water quality of the Bay *(see Figure 8.6)*.

To bring our waters back to life, a massive clean-up of rivers and esteros in the cities and municipalities around the Manila Bay was undertaken. In the Pasig River alone, we solved the recurring problem that prevents the river from being clear and navigable, with the collection of 13,441.11 tons of trash and water hyacinth.

To further prevent the influx of trash and solid wastes into the river, which directly drains into Manila Bay, trash traps were installed in strategic locations along the river.

To sustain our gains, the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program continues to be one of our top priorities. With the firm resolve to bring Manila Bay back to life, we urge our countrymen to support and join the cleanup, rehabilitation and preservation of the Manila Bay, in accordance with the three-year Manila Bay Rehabilitation Plan. The program covers Region III, Region IV-A, and the NCR as the priority areas. With the unwavering commitment and determination of every volunteer to contribute in this rehabilitation effort, half of the battle is won for Manila Bay.

However, we must not stop here. Let us be ambitious in securing the future of the next generation, particularly by protecting the environment while at the same time, supporting the livelihood of our people.

Figure 8.5 **Accomplishments under the Boracay Island Rehabilitation**

Boracay Island Rehabilitation and Development Initiatives
Beach Easement Recovery 67% accomplished, with 227 of the 339 structures now compliant with the 25+5 Beach Easement Guidelines.
Improvement of the Boracay Circumferential Road 50% accomplished, with ongoing construction of sidewalks with paving blocks, street lighting, tree planting, pavement marking, and the provision of bike lanes.
Ongoing rehabilitation and recovery of wetland ecosystems conducted with private sector partners, i.e., Energy Development Corporation, San Miguel Corporation, Aboitiz Foundation Inc., Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., Boracay Tubi Systems, Inc., and JG Summit Petrochemical Corporation.
Ongoing implementation of the Boracay Drainage Improvement Project, with the construction of drainage systems along Bulabog Road 97.39% accomplished and installation of pumps at the Central Boracay Business District, the most flood-prone area in the island, 60% accomplished.

Source: DENR

Figure 8.6 **Accomplishments Under the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program**

The establishment of the Sewage Treatment Plant along Roxas Boulevard in Manila, which was inaugurated in January 2020, is part of the government's efforts to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay. *Photo Credit: PNA*

- **Decreased coliform levels in Major Manila Bay Outfalls** through the sewage interceptor and treatment plant installed in front of the Manila Yacht Club. Coliform levels drastically decreased from 54 million most probable number (mpn)/100ml to 920,000 mpn/100ml in outfalls in Padre Faura, Raja Soliman/ Remedios drainage and Manila Yacht Club

Groundbreaking of the Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas (CAMANA) Water Reclamation Facility in November 2019. *Photo Credit: MWSS*

- **Daily treatment of about 205 million liters of wastewater** by about 1.2 million households through the PhP10.5 billion CAMANA Water Reclamation Facility

DENR Secretary Cimatu and San Miguel Corporation (SMC) President Ramon Ang seal with a firm handshake the Memorandum of Agreement for the cleanup of the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System on March 4, 2019. *Photo Credit: DENR*

- **Dredging and cleanup of the Tullahan-Tinajeros (TuTi) River System** through the PhP1 billion support from the SMC

Clean up of Baseco Beach in Manila Bay on February 6, 2019. *Photo Credit: DENR*

- **Transforming the Baseco Beach shoreline into a sustainable coastal area** through the establishment of a mangrove plantation and cleanup of the Baseco Beach

- **Relocation of 42,886 informal settler families (ISFs) residing in danger zones,** i.e., rivers, esteros and creeks, out of the 267,727 ISFs target for the 3rd quarter of 2019

Sources: DENR & PNA

Improving Air Quality[229]

To help protect human health and the environment, we undertook measures to improve the air quality in the country. Among these is the promotion of renewable sources and technologies in both the power and non-power sectors, and the regulation of the exploration, development, and utilization of renewable energy sources.

In 2019, about 2.6 million tons oil equivalent (mtoe) were saved through the energy efficiency and conservation program. This avoided the release of 5.6 million tons (mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent.[230]

We also closely monitored the compliance of about 18,089 firms to the Philippine Clean Air Act. About 15,074 of these firms are compliant while more than 3,015 were issued with notice of violations.[231] I am warning those who will play deaf to the orders of the law. Comply or suffer the consequences of your inaction. Let us cooperate to help our future generations enjoy a clean and livable environment.

Sustained the National Greening Program[232]

As a priority program of the government, we are implementing the National Greening Program (NGP), which aims to reduce poverty, attain food security, and conserve and protect the country's biodiversity and forests.

Since day one of my Administration, we have planted a span of 623,672 hectares under the ENGP. This generated an estimated 1.76 million jobs in seedling production, plantation establishment, and maintenance and protection of plantations that provided income to 257,303 individuals from local communities and People's Organizations.

Foremost in the program's objectives is to encourage communities to develop social enterprises to produce sustainable livelihood and entice our LGUs and organized upland communities to develop forest plantations including forest parks.

Social enterprises focusing on rubber or coffee plantation were also supported, creating more livelihood opportunities for our people. Even People's Organizations or Associations have engaged in timber and fruit bearing plantations, which provide them livelihood and income. The reliance of communities on our NGP for their consumption and livelihood marks a significant step towards our goal of sustainable development and environmental protection.

To sustain our gains, we shall continue to implement the NGP. In the spirit of *bayanihan*, we encourage the private sector to complement the government's initiatives and invest in forestry-related undertakings like tree plantation development and forest protection projects as measures to protect the environment and provide sustainable livelihood to our countrymen.

229 CCAM-DRR, June 30, 2020 and DENR, July 17, 2020.
230 DOE, July 20, 2020.
231 CCAM-DRR Cluster, June 30, 2020.
232 DENR, July 17, 2020.

The 72-hectare Rubber Plantation of the Lukiki Farmers Care for Environment and Natural Resources Association located in New Pontevedra, Antipas, Cotabato.
Photo Credit: DENR

To curb the effects of COVID-19 on our farmers and beneficiaries, we allowed the use of mechanized nursery facilities and equipment in support to food production. As of June 2020, we have produced 2,198,812 vegetable seedlings and 6,436,691 forest tree seedlings. Of these, 855,229 vegetable seedlings and 550,485 forest tree seedlings have already been distributed to several of our communities and people's organizations.

Implemented the *Plant, Plant, Plant* Program[233]

Recognizing the decline in the supply and production of food as a result of the implementation of lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will intensify the implementation of the *Plant, Plant, Plant* Program or the *"Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Laban sa* COVID-19" to benefit our farmers and fisherfolk and consumers nationwide. This is our centerpiece initiative to ensure sustained food production and availability, food accessibility and affordability amidst the threats of the pandemic.

Source: DENR

233 DA, June 23, 2020 and PNA, May 13, 2020.

This PhP66 billion stimulus program shall be instrumental in ensuring our survival, rebooting our economy, and developing the agriculture and fisheries sector. It shall also help mitigate the damages brought by the pandemic among our farmers and fisherfolk. To help our farmers and fisherfolk build up their agricultural value chain, we shall implement projects that will enhance economic recovery and increase income opportunities *(see Table 8.3)*.

We will also intensify the use of advanced and relevant technologies to increase our levels of productivity. Our utmost priority is to ensure that our people will not starve, and that we have enough supply to tide us over the lean months. This shall apply to all other major agricultural and fishery commodities.

Our country shall move forward and face

Some fisherfolk beneficiaries of the ALPAS Laban sa COVID-19 Program
Photo Credit: CCAM-DRR and DA

As of July 8, 2020, a total of 21,717 hectares or 50.15% of the DA-CAR target area have already been provided with seed assistance benefitting about 19,975 rice farmers in the region.
Photo Credit: DA and Maricel Marafo, Rice Program

Table 8.3 **Plant, Plant, Plant Program Components and Projects**

COMPONENT 1

IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO FARMERS, FISHERS, FARM WORKERS, AND PRODUCERS

1. Rice Buffer stocking
2. Upscaling of KADIWA ni Ani at Kita
3. Rice Resiliency Project
4. Integrated Livestock and Corn Resiliency Project
5. Expanded Small Ruminants and Poultry Project
6. Enhanced White Corn Production for Food Resiliency
7. Coconut-based Diversification Project
8. Fisheries Resiliency Project
9. Urban Agriculture Project
10. Revitalized *Gulayan* Project
11. Expanded Sure Aid and Recovery Project
12. Expanded Agriculture Insurance Project
13. Sustained Information, Education, and Communication Project
14. Social Amelioration for Farmers, Fishers, and Farm Workers

COMPONENT 2

FOOD LOGISTICS / FOOD MARKETS AND OTHER INTERVENTIONS TO MITIGATE THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF COVID-19

1. Food Logistics / Food Markets Project
2. Strengthening of Price Monitoring and Enforcement System
3. Communication support to Agri 4Ps
4. Expanding expansion support to the provincial LGUs
5. Agricultural and Fisheries Commodity Exchange System
6. Digital Agriculture Project

COMPONENT 3

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO AGRICULTURAL FARM WORKERS TO HELP FUNNEL CASH TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

1. Cash for Work Project in Agriculture

Source: DA

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the next normal with firm resolve and certainty. We shall see to it that our actions shall not just be an amalgamation of knee-jerk reactions and quick fixes but will seriously take into account the country's long-term sustainability. Beyond the pandemic, we shall bolster our healthcare system hand-in-hand with our efforts for sustainable development, environmental protection and conservation, and resiliency. We shall ensure that the lessons from this pandemic are translated into concrete and lasting actions to ensure the well-being and resilience of Filipinos.

Our healthcare system shall be significantly geared-up to combat similar pandemics, while also addressing our age-old health concerns. We shall do this by giving the health sector a responsive budget to upgrade its facilities and equipment, hire more healthcare workers, and institute health resiliency measures. I shall aggressively move towards the creation of an empowered body for disease prevention and control to serve as our nerve center in preparing for and managing similar contagions.

Cognizant of the fact that the abuse of wildlife and endangered species leads to the transfer of harmful diseases to humans, we shall value nature as the foundation for a healthy society. Towards this end, we shall intensify our efforts to safeguard the environment. I want our success in Boracay Island to be sustained and replicated across the country. I want the Manila Bay rehabilitation program to shift to sixth gear to produce the same, if not better, results as in Boracay Island. Alongside this, we shall prioritize sustainable means of pursuing growth and development to provide livelihood to our countrymen while ensuring that our natural resources are sustainably harnessed, thus maintaining ecological stability and health.

It is also imperative that once and for all, we realize durable institutional reforms towards bolstering our resilience against natural disasters. We need to pass the Administration version of the DDR now. We are all witnesses to the painful lessons learned from past disasters such as super typhoon Yolanda. These hard-earned lessons should not be ignored. As a short term yet high impact effort to ensure effective disaster response, I want the clearing of roads to be intensified nationwide to help ensure the seamless dispatch of responders and immediate relief operations. In the same vein, we need to decongest our traditional urban centers, particularly Metro Manila, to reduce their vulnerabilities to pollution, disasters, and infectious diseases. As part of our comprehensive efforts to achieve this, we shall pursue the creation of super-regional centers and the eventual transfer of the seat of national government to a more resilient site. This would also help ensure the uninterrupted delivery of public services to the people in case a disaster renders Metro Manila paralyzed.

I have full faith in the resiliency and capacity of the Filipino people to rise above any disaster, pandemic or effects of climate change. We owe it to them to build on that innate resiliency with tenacity and urgency.

Photo Credit: BRP Davao del Sur, Philippine Navy.

Conclusion

From the ashes of adversity, a more resilient and stronger nation built on *Bayanihan*, *Panaghiusa*, and *Pag-asa* shall emerge.

The spirit of solidarity and unity that we have shown amidst the tests that we are facing as a people is my source of hope. The same spirit will serve as the drumbeat to which we shall all march in unison.

May our innate sense of *Bayanihan* and *Malasakit* ignite a fire in us. I enjoin you all to continue helping with greater zeal the less privileged as we continue to search for the light at the end of the tunnel.

Let this be my call and challenge to my fellow workers in government, local chief executives, the members of Congress, the Judiciary and the constitutional commissions, the economic titans, civil society, and our people: let us be a blessing to our fellow Filipinos. This is the time to persevere, bring out the very best in each one of us, and do the most good in the best way we ever can. This is the time to set aside our differences as we take care of one another and work together to help our country recover.

Together, we shall fight this pandemic with the same fervor as our campaign against illegal drugs, criminality, insurgency, corruption in high places and entrenched parochial interests.

We shall collectively build a nation that is more secure, prosperous, healthy, and resilient and bequeath to the next generation a better quality of life wherein everyone's potential is maximized and aspirations realized.

Let me end, once again, by wishing everyone in the language of the old: "May God keep us forever sheltered in the hollow of His hand."

ANNEX: ONGOING AND PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Table 7.1 **List of RoRo routes targeted to be opened by 2022**

1. Lucena, Quezon - Romblon, Romblon
2. San Andres, Quezon - San Pascual, Burias Island, Masbate
3. New San Jose Port, Occidental Mindoro - Batangas, Batangas City
4. Taytay, Palawan - Cuyo, Palawan
5. Mainit, Oslob, Cebu - Dumaguete, Negros Oriental
6. Maya Port, Daanbantayan, Cebu - Calbayog City
7. San Juan, Batangas - Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro
8. Siaton, Bonbonon, Negros Oriental - Dipolog, Zamboanga Del Norte
9. San Juan, Batangas - City of Calapan, Oriental Mindoro
10. Iloilo City - Cuyo, Palawan
11. San Pascual, Burias Island, Masbate - Pasacao, Camarines Sur
12. San Andres, Quezon - Pasacao, Camarines Sur
13. San Andres, Quezon - San Pascual, Masbate - Pasacao, Camarines Sur
14. Lucena, Quezon - San Fernando, Masbate
15. Lucena, Quezon - Odiongan, Romblon - Caticlan / New Washington, Aklan
16. Cataingan City, Samar - Cataingan, Masbate
17. Cuyo, Palawan - San Jose de Buenavista, Antique
18. Lipata, Surigao - Dapa, Siargao Island, Surigao Del Norte
19. Lucena, Quezon - Buyabod, Sta. Cruz, Marinduque
20. Pantao, Albay - San Pascual, Masbate
21. Poro, Camotes Island, Cebu - Isabel, Leyte
22. Punta Engaño, Mactan Island, Cebu - Getafe, Bohol
23. Tabuelan, Cebu - Ajuy, Iloilo
24. Loay, Bohol - Cagayan de Oro

Source: DOTr

Table 7.2 **Ongoing maritime port projects targeted for completion within 2020**

1. Rehabilitation and upgrading of Pier 18 in Vitas, Tondo, Manila
2. Construction of Port Operations Building in Abra de Ilog Port, Occidental Mindoro
3. Expansion of Balanacan Port, Marinduque
4. Construction of reinforced concrete pier and RoRo ramp in Bansud Port, Oriental Mindoro
5. Construction of back-up area at the Bulalacao Port, Oriental Mindoro
6. Construction of RoRo ramp and expansion of Bulan Port, Sorsogon
7. Construction of the Coastal Access Road at the Port of Calapan, Oriental Mindoro
8. Expansion of Capinpin Port, Bataan
9. Reconstruction of Carmen Port, Romblon
10. Construction of Cobo Port, Catanduanes
11. Construction of Port Operations Building in Coron Port, Palawan
12. Construction of Port Operations Building in Currimao Port, Ilocos Norte
13. Construction of Port Operations Building in Masbate Port, Masbate City
14. Construction of Port Operations Building in Mauban Port, Quezon
15. Rehabilitation of Talaga Port in Mabini, Batangas
16. Rehabilitation of Legazpi Port, Albay

Table 7.2 **Ongoing maritime port projects targeted for completion within 2020**
17. Expansion of Matnog Port, Sorsogon
18. Expansion of Puerto Princesa Port, Palawan
19. Expansion of Salomague Port, Ilocos Sur
20. Expansion of Tablas Port, Romblon
21. Expansion of Terminal Management Office, Pasig City
22. Rehabilitation of Tabaco Port, Albay

Source: DOTr

Table 7.3 **Select ongoing airport projects**

Project Title	Description	Status	Target Completion
Bicol (New Legazpi) International Airport	Construction of an airport to accommodate two million passengers annually and boost tourism in Bicol.	66.61% constructed as of June 2020	December 2020
Rehabilitation of the NAIA	Improvement works on the NAIA to boost its passenger capacity and improve its air navigation facilities and equipment.	Ongoing rehabilitation works	2020
Bulacan International Airport	Construction of an airport, which will accommodate 100-200 million passengers annually to complement the operations of the NAIA and Clark International Airport.	Ongoing pre-construction works	2025
Catbalogan-Buri Airport	Improvement works on the airport, which include the construction of a 1.5-storey passenger terminal building and extension of runway.	Ongoing pre-construction works	2021

Source: DOTr

Table 7.4 **Night-rated airports as of July 2020 and airports targeted for night-rating by 2022**

Airports Night-rated as of July 2020		Airports for Night-rating by 2022
1. NAIA	12. Iloilo International Airport	1. Subic Bay International Airport
2. Clark International Airport	13. Laguindingan Airport	2. Cauayan Airport
3. Mactan-Cebu International Airport	14. Tacloban Airport	3. Dipolog Airport
4. Davao International Airport	15. Dumaguete Airport	4. Pagadian Airport
5. Kalibo International Airport	16. Legazpi Airport	5. San Jose (Mindoro) Airport
6. Laoag International Airport	17. Roxas Airport	6. Bicol (New Legazpi) Airport
7. Puerto Princesa International Airport	18. Caticlan Airport	7. Sangley Airport
8. General Santos International Airport	19. Panglao-Bohol International Airport	8. Ozamiz Airport
9. Zamboanga International Airport	20. Tuguegarao Airport	9. Sanga-Sanga Airport
10. Bacolod-Silay Airport	21. Naga Airport	10. Calbayog Airport
11. Butuan Airport	22. Cotabato Airport	11. Ormoc Airport
		12. San Vicente Airport
		13. Antique Airport
		14. Virac Airport
		15. Catbalogan-Buri Airport

Source: DOTr

Table 7.5 **Other ongoing and proposed projects under the LSEN**

Expressway	Description	Status	Target Completion
Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX) Extension (Rosario – San Juan, La Union)	• A 59.4-km toll road from the exit of TPLEX in Rosario, La Union to San Juan, La Union. • Will decongest traffic along McArthur Highway.	Ongoing NEDA-ICC evaluation	TBD
North Eastern Luzon Expressway	• Composed of 45-km viaduct, 65-km roads, and 17-km tunnel to connect Central Luzon and Cagayan Valley the regions through Quirino, Nueva Vizcaya, and Nueva Ecija.	Ongoing feasibility study (FS)	TBD
North Luzon Expressway East (NLEE)	• A 91.10-km expressway that will enhance transport network in North Luzon.	For FS	TBD
NLEE (La Mesa Parkways Project)	• A 19-km toll road between Commonwealth – La Mesa and Bigte, Bulacan. • Will ease traffic congestion in Northeast Metro Manila and provide a scenic corridor to Northeast Luzon.	For NEDA-ICC evaluation	TBD
NLEX Harbor Link, Segment 8.2	• An 8.35-km expressway between NLEX Harbor Link Segment 8.1 and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City. • Will reduce travel time from Mindanao Ave. to Commonwealth Ave. from 45 minutes to 10 minutes. • Will benefit 45,000 motorists per day.	Ongoing pre-construction works	2024
Cavite-Tagaytay-Batangas Expressway	• A 50.43-km tollway traversing of Silang, Tagaytay, Amadeo, Mendez, Alfonso, and Magallanes, all in the Cavite, and Nasugbu in Batangas. • Provide an alternative route to Aguinaldo Highway and Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay Road	Ongoing NEDA-ICC evaluation	TBD
Quezon-Bicol Expressway	• A 220 kilometer expressway that will from at Tayabas, Quezon and will end at the existing Maharlika Highway in San Fernando, Camarines Sur. • Will reduce travel time between Pagbilao, Quezon and San Fernando, Camarines Sur by 2.2 hours.	Ongoing pre-construction activities	TBD

Source: DPWH

Table 7.6 **Bridges under the Inter-Island Linkage Program**

Bridges	Description	Status	Target Completion
Panguil Bay Bridge	• A 3.1-km bridge connecting the City of Tangub in Misamis Occidental to the Municipality of Tubod in Lanao del Norte. • Will reduce travel time between the two areas from 2.5 hours to 7 minutes.	Ongoing pre-construction activities	2023
Panglao-Tagbilaran City Offshore Connector Bridge	• A 1.27-km main bridge connecting mainland Bohol to Dauis and Panglao; two short-span bridges totaling 42.7 m; and 1.40-km approach roads. • Will reduce travel time between Tagbilaran City seaport and Panglao Island from 45 minutes to 15 minutes.	Ongoing construction of off-shore and short-span bridges and approach roads	2023
Guicam Bridge, Zamboanga Sibugay	• A 540.80-m bridge and a 667.20-m approach road connecting Olutanga Island to mainland Zamboanga Peninsula in Zamboanga Sibugay.	Ongoing pre-construction activities	2023
Nalil-Sikkiat Bridge, Tawi-Tawi	• A 380.80-m bridge and 160-m road connecting Brgy. Nalil and Brgy. Pakias in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.	Ongoing pre-construction activities	2023
Tongsinah-Paniongan Bridge, Tawi-Tawi	• A 380.80-m bridge and 188.46-m approach road connecting Brgy. Tongsinah and Brgy. Paniongan in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.	Ongoing pre-construction activities	2023
Malassa-Lupa Pula Bridge, Tawi-Tawi	• A 480.60-m bridge and 200-m road connecting Brgy. Malassa and Brgy. Lupa Pula, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.	Ongoing pre-construction activities	2023
Panay-Guimaras-Negros Link Island Bridge Project	• A 32.47-km inter-island bridges, including connecting roads and interchanges, that will link Panay Island, Guimaras Island, and Negros Island. • Will reduce travel time between: ◊ Iloilo, Panay and Buenavista, Guimaras from 45 minutes to 10 minutes; and ◊ Buenavista, Guimaras and Pulupandan, Negros from one hour to 15 minutes.	Ongoing pre-construction actities	2028
Cebu-Mactan Bridge and Coastal Road Construction Project	• A 3.3-km bridge and 4.9-km road connecting Mandaue City, Cebu, and Lapu-Lapu City, Mactan.	Ongoing pre-construction actities	2027
Samal Island-Davao City Connector Bridge	• A 3.98-km bridge connecting Island Garden City of Samal and Davao City. • Travel time will be reduced from 26-30 minutes using RoRo/ferry to 2-5 minutes using the bridge.	Ongoing pre-construction actities	2024
Bataan-Cavite Interlink Bridge	• Construction of a 32.15-km, two long-span bridges connecting Mariveles, Bataan to Naic, Cavite. • Travel time will be reduced from six hours to 45 minutes.	Ongoing pre-construction actities	2024

Source: DPWH

Table 7.7 **Ongoing railway projects**

Project Title	Description	Status	Target Completion
LRT-1 Cavite Extension	• A 11.7-km extension that will connect the current LRT-1 from Baclaran to the Niog area in Bacoor. • Will reduce travel time from Baclaran to Bacoor from over two hours to about 25 minutes. • Will accommodate 800,000 passengers daily.	47.50% constructed as of June 2020	2022
LRT-2 East Extension	• A 3.8-km extension of the existing LRT-2 System from Santolan, Pasig City to Masinag in Antipolo, Rizal with two additional stations: (1) Emerald station in Cainta; and (2) Masinag station in Antipolo City. • Will reduce commuting time from Masinag in Antipolo to Claro M. Recto in Manila by 30 to 40 minutes from an average of three hours of driving on the road. • Will accommodate an additional 80,000 passengers per day.	90.17% constructed as of June 2020	2020
MRT Line 7	• A 22-km line that will connect North Avenue in Quezon City to the City of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan. • Will service 300,000-850,000 passengers in Metro Manila, Bulacan, and Rizal.	58.95% constructed as of June 2020	2021
Unified Grand Central Station	• Will connect the four main lines in Metro Manila: MRT-3, LRT-1, MRT-7, and the Metro Manila Subway. • Divided into three parts: ◊ Area A – Additional one Station for LRT-1 and MRT-3; ◊ Area B – Atrium which will connect Area A and Area C; and ◊ Area C – Terminal Station of MRT-7. • The 13,700-square meter project will have a spacious concourse area that will facilitate seamless transfer of passengers from one line to another.	Construction of Area B in September 2017 and Area A in February 2019	2021
Metro Manila Subway	• A 36-km subway with 17 stations (from Quirino Highway corner Mindanao Avenue to NAIA) that will connect the north and south portions of Manila. • Will reduce travel time from Quezon City to NAIA from one hour and 10 minutes to 35 minutes.	17.26% constructed as of June 2020	2025

Table 7.7 **Ongoing railway projects**

Project Title	Description	Status	Target Completion
PNR North (Manila-Clark)	• Phase 1 (Tutuban-Malolos) is a 37.6-km segment with 10 stations that can accommodate 340,000 passengers in its opening year. ◊ Will allow commuters from Tutuban to reach Malolos in 35 minutes compared to approximately two hours by bus or car via McArthur Highway. • Phase 2 (Malolos-Clark) is a 53-km segment with six stations. ◊ Will allow commuters to reach the Clark International Airport from Buendia, Makati in 55 minutes compared to two hours by private vehicle via expressway.	Phase 1 is 39.26% constructed as of June 2020, while Phase 2 is undergoing pre-construction works	2022
PNR Calamba (Manila-Calamba)	• A 56-km railway project that will link Metro Manila and Laguna, which will accommodate 550,000 passengers daily upon full system operation. • Will cut travel time between Manila and Calamba, Laguna from three to one hour.	Undergoing pre-construction works	2023
PNR Bicol (Manila-Bicol)	• A 639-km long-haul passenger and freight rail from Manila to Batangas, Albay, and Sorsogon, which can service 100,000 passengers daily. • Will cut travel time between Manila and Legazpi City from 12 hours via car to just six hours.	Under ongoing pre-construction works	2023

Source: DOTr

Table 7.8 **Proposed bridges to ease congestion in Metro Manila**

Bridge	Description	Target Completion
North and South Harbor Bridge	A 2,026-m Bridge connecting North Harbor and South Harbor in Manila.	2024
Palanca-Villegas Bridge	A 438.1-m Steel Lohse Arch Bridge connecting A. Villegas St. and Carlos Palanca St. in Manila	2023
Beata-Manalo Bridge	A 637-m bridge, connecting Beata, Padre Jacinto Zamora, and Felix Manalo Sts. along Pasig River.	TBD
Blumentritt-Antipolo Bridge	A 364-m bridge, linking Antipolo St., Makati City and Coronado St., Mandaluyong City.	TBD
Eastbank-Westbank Bridge 1	A 200-m bridge connecting Eastbank Dike Road and Westbank Dike Road, Pasig City.	TBD
J.P. Rizal-Lopez Jaena Bridge	A 594.2-m bridge connecting J.P. Rizal St. and Lopez Jaena St. in Marikina City.	2023
J.P. Rizal-St. Mary Bridge	A 2,178.2-m bridge connecting J.P. Rizal St. and A. Bonifacio Ave. in Marikina City.	2024
Marikina-Vista Real Bridge	A 414.9-m bridge connecting Kabayani Road in Marikina City and Stockholm St. & Delhi St. in Quezon City.	2024
Mercury-Evangelista Bridge	A 527.8-m bridge connecting Mercury Ave., Quezon City and Evangelista Ave., Pasig City.	TBD
Eastbank-Westbank Bridge 2	A 929.8-m bridge connecting Eastbank Dike Road and Westbank Dike Road in Cainta, Rizal.	2024

Source: DPWH

LIST OF ACRONYMS

4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
4Ps-MCCT	4Ps-Modified Conditional Cash Transfer
ABS-CBN	Alto Broadcasting System-Chronicle Broadcasting Network
ACADEME	Academic Development to Empower the Masses towards Endless Opportunities
ACPC	Agricultural Credit Policy Council
AFCS	Automatic Fare Collection System
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
AFP/PNP	Armed Forces of the Philippines/Philippine National Police
AirBnB	Air Bed and Breakfast
AIR-TIP	Assistance Against Illegal Recruitment / Trafficking-in-Person Victim
AK-47	Avtomat Kalashnikova-47
ALPAS	Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat Laban sa COVID-19
ALS	Alternative Learning System
AMLC	Anti-Money Laundering Council
AO	Administrative Order
ARB	Agrarian Reform Beneficiary
ARTA	Anti-Red Tape Authority
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASF	African Swine Fever
ASG	Abu Sayyaf Group
ATI	Agricultural Training Institute
ATIGA	ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement
ATN	Assistance to Nationals
AWA	Alternative Work Arrangements
AWSC	ASEAN-wide Self-Certification
AWTIP	Angat Water Transmission Improvement Project
AY	Academic Year
BALAI	Building Adequate, Livable, Affordable, and Inclusive Filipino Communities
BARMM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BATAS	BOC's Action Team Against Smugglers
BBWSP	Bulacan Bulk Water Supply Project
BCDA	Bases Conversion and Development Authority
BDA	Basic Deposit Account
BE-LCP	Basic Education-Learning Continuity Plan
BFF	Bayanihan Frontliners Fund
BHERT	Barangay Health Emergency Response Team
BI	Bureau of Immigration
BIAF	Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces
BIATF	Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force
BIDA	Boracay Island Development Authority
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
BIR	Bureau of Internal Revenue
BKBK	Barangay Ko, Bahay Ko Disinfection/ Sanitation Project
BLA	Bilateral Labor Agreement
BMBEs	Barangay Micro Business Enterprises
BNRS	Business Name Registration System
BOC	Bureau of Customs
BOI	Board of Investments
BOL	Bangsamoro Organic Law
BP2	Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program
BPBH	Balik Pinas! Balik Hanapbuhay! Program
BPI	Bank of the Philippine Islands
BPLS	Business Processing and Licensing System
BRP	Barko ng Republika ng Pilipinas
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
BTA	Bangsamoro Transition Authority
BTMS	Budget and Treasury Management System
C4W	Cash for Work
C-5	Circumferential Road 5
C-6	Circumferential Road 6
CAAP	Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines
CAB	Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro
CADTs	Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles
CALABARZON	Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon (Region IV-A)
CAMANA	Caloocan Malabon Navotas Water Reclamation Facility
CAMP	COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program
CAMP-AKAP	CAMP-Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong sa OFWs
CAR	Cordillera Administrative Region
CARES	COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises
CBDRP	Community-based Drug Rehabilitation Program
CBP	Central Business Portal
CBS	Cash Budgeting System
CCAM-DRR	Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction
CCB	Contact Center ng Bayan
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CebuPac	Cebu Pacific Air
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CITIRB	Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Reform Bill
CLEA	Capital Loan Easy Access
CLLEX	Central Luzon Link Expressway
CLOA	Certificate of Land Ownership Award
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plan
COC	Code of Conduct
CONWEP	Confederation of Wearable Exporters of the Philippines
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CPP-NPA-NDF	Communist Party of the Philippines - New People's Army - National Democratic Front
CREATE	Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act
CSBP	Comprehensive Social Benefits Program
CSC	Civil Service Commission
CSF	Credit Surety Fund
CTBEX	Cavite-Tagaytay-Batangas Expressway
CTG	Communist Terrorist Group
DA	Department of Agriculture
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DBP	Development Bank of the Philippines
DDR	Department of Disaster Resilience
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd	Department of Education
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DHSUD	Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development
DI	Daulah Islamiyah
DICT	Department of Information and Communications Technology
DILEEP	DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program
DILG	Department of the Interior and Local Government
DLP.PH	Dynamic Learning Program
DMU	Diesel Multiple Unit
DND	Department of National Defense
DND-OCD	Department of National Defense - Office of Civil Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOF	Department of Finance
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DOLE-AMP	DOLE-Adjustment Measures Program
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
DOST-SEI	Department of Science and Technology-Science Education Institute
DOT	Department of Tourism
DOTr	Department of Transportation
DPWH	Department of Public Works and Highways
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
e-BPLS	Electronic Business Permits and Licensing System
E-CLIP	Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program
eComplaint R.A.T.E.	BIR's eComplaint Run After Tax Evaders
ECQ	Enhanced Community Quarantine
ECT	Emergency Cash Transfer Program
EDSA	Epifanio de los Santos Avenue
e-FOI	Electronic Freedom of Information
E-Inquest	Electronic Inquest Proceeding
EIU	The Economist Intelligence Unit
ENDO	End of Contract
ENGP	Enhanced National Greening Program
EO	Executive Order
EPP	Edukasyong Pantahanan at Pangkabuhayan
EQFs	Emergency Quarantine Facilities
ER	Energy Regulations
ERCA	Expanded Rice Credit Assistance
ESC	Education Service Contracting
ETEEAP	Expanded Tertiary Education Equivalency and Accreditation Program
FASSSTER	Feasibility Analysis of Syndromic Surveillance using Spatio-Temporal Epidemiological Modeler for Early Detection of Diseases
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments
FF	Fast Frigate
FFWS	Flood Forecasting and Warning Systems
FHE	Free Higher Education
FIRB	Fiscal Incentives Review Board
FIST	Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer Act
FMR	Farm-to-Market Road
FOI	Freedom of Information
FSP	Financial Service Provider
FSRF	Financial Subsidy for Rice Farmers
FW4A	Free Wi-Fi for All Project
FY	Fiscal Year
GAA	General Appropriations Act
GASTPE	Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education
GCQ	General Community Quarantine
GCTA	Good Conduct Time Allowance
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GECS-MOVE	Government Emergency Communication System-Mobile Operation Vehicle for Emergency
GeoRiskPH	Geospatial Information Management and Analysis Project for Hazards and Risk Assessment in the Philippines
GFI	Government Financial Institution
GFSI	Global Food Security Index
GMMA	Greater Metro Manila Area
GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite System
GOCC	Government Owned and Controlled Corporations
GPS	Global Positioning System
GSIS	Government Service Insurance System

LIST OF ACRONYMS

GUIDE	Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery
ha	Hectare
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HFDR	High Frequency Doppler Radars
HH	Household
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLURB	Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board
HRH	Human Resources for Health
HUDCC	Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council
i-ACT	Inter-Agency Council for Traffic
IATF-EID	Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases
IATF-MEID	Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases
ICCP	Investment and Capital Corporation of the Philippines
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
IDF	Internally Displaced Family
IDFs	Internally Displaced Families
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
iFund	Innovation Enabling Fund
IGRB	Intergovernmental Relations Body
INC	Iglesia ni Cristo
INDOMALPHI	Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines
IPs	Indigenous Peoples
IRR	Implementing Rules and Regulations
ISFs	Informal Settler Families
I-STUDY	Interim Student's Loan for Tuitions towards Upliftment of Education for the Development of the Youth
JETC	Joint Economic and Trade Committee
JHS	Junior High School
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JMSDF	Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force
JPST	Joint Peace and Security Team
K to 12	Kindergarten and 12
KADIWA	Katuwang sa Diwa at Gawa para sa Masaganang Ani at Mataas na Kita
KAK	Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita
KDK	KADIWA Diskwento Karavan
kg	Kilogram
km	Kilometer
KMME	Kapatid Mentor Me Program
kph	Kilometer per Hour
KSA	Key Shelter Agencies
LAF	Legal Assistance Fund
LANDBANK	Land Bank of the Philippines
LBI	Luzon Bypass Infrastructure
LESF	Learner Enrollment Survey Form
LGU	Local Government Unit
LIGTAS COV-ID-19	Local Isolation and General Treatment Areas for COVID-19 cases
LinGap sa MaSa	Lingap at Gabay Para sa May Sakit
LMS	Learning Management System
LRA	Land Registration Authority
LRT	Light Rail Transit
LRT1	Light Rail Transit Line 1
LRT2	Light Rail Transit Line 2
LRV	Light Rail Vehicle
LSEN	Luzon Spine Expressway Network
LSIs	Locally Stranded Individuals
LTFRB	Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board
LTMS	Land Transportation Management System
LTO	Land Transportation Office
MAPEH	Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health
Maynilad	Maynilad Water Services Inc.
Mbps	Megabits per Second
MC	Memorandum Circular
MCIA	Mactan-Cebu International Airport
MELCs	Most Essential Learning Competencies
Meralco	Manila Electric Railroad and Light Company
MFI	Microfinance Institutions
MICT	Manila International Container Terminal
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MILF-BIAF	MILF-Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces
MIMAROPA	Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan (Region IV-B)
MISLATEL	Mindanao Islamic Telephone Company, Inc.
MLD	Million Liters per Day
MMDA	Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
MMT	Million Metric Tons
MNP	Mobile Number Portability
MOOE	Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPHILGEPS	Modernized Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System
MPN	Most Probable Number
MRT	Metro Rail Transit
MRT-3	Metro Rail Transit Line 3
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises
MSFF	Marginalized Small Farmers and Fisherfolk
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

LIST OF ACRONYMS

MT	Metric Ton
MT	Million Tons
MT/ha	metric tons per hectare
MTC	Modified Train Capacity
MTOE	Million Tons Oil Equivalent
MUP	Military and Uniformed Personnel
MVP Group of Companies	Manuel V. Pangilinan Group of Companies
MW	Megawatt
MWSS	Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
NAIA	Ninoy Aquino International Airport
NaLUA	National Land Use Act
NAMRIA	National Mapping and Resource Information Authority
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NBOSS	National Business One-Stop Shop
NBP	National Broadband Plan
NC	Negosyo Center
NCC	New Clark City
NCIP	National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NCR	National Capital Region
NCWS - KDP	New Centennial Water Source – Kaliwa Dam Project
NDF	National Democratic Front
NDRRM	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NEHEMIA	National Effort on the Harmonization on the Harmonization of Efficient Measures of Interrelated Agencies
NFA	National Food Authority
NFOC	National Fiber Optic Cable
NGA	National Government Agency
NGAs	National Government Agencies
NGCP	National Grid Corporation of the Philippines
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGP	National Government Portal
NGP	National Greening Program
NHA	National Housing Agency
NHIP	National Health Insurance Program
NIC	National Incident Command
NICA	National Intelligence Coordincating Agency
NLEX	North Luzon Expressway
NPA	New People's Army
NSC	National Security Council
NSFI	National Strategy for Financial Inclusion
NTC	National Telecommunications Commission
NTF-ELCAC	National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict
OBI	Open Budget Index
OBS	Open Budget Survey
OES	Office of the Executive Secretary
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
OSSCO	One-Stop Service Center for OFWs
OTP	On-time Performance
OWWA	Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
P2P	Point-to-Point
P3	Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso
PACC	Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission
PAGASA	Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration
Pag-IBIG	Pagtutulungan sa Kinabukasan: Ikaw, Bangko, Industria at Gobyerno Home Development Mutual Fund
PAL	Philippine Airlines
PAMANA	Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan Program
PCC	Philippine Carabao Center
PCDCP	Philippine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
PCG	Philippine Coast Guard
PCOO	Presidential Communications Operations Office
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
PCSO	Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office
PDEA	Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PDRF	Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation
PEN	Public Education Network
PES	Public Employment Service
PESFA	Private Education Student Financial Assistance
PESONet	Philippine Electronic Fund Transfer System and Operations Network
PH	Philippines
PH Progreso	Philippine Program for Recovery with Equity and Solidarity
PhilHealth	Philippine Health Insurance Corporation
PhilMech	Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization
PhilRice	Philippine Rice Research Institute
PhilStar	The Philippine Star
PHL-Micro-sat	Philippine Scientific Earth Observation Microsatellite
PhP	Philippine Peso
PIA	Philippine Information Agency
PICC	Philippine International Convention Center

LIST OF ACRONYMS

PITX	Paranaque Integrated Terminal Exchange
PLCN	Pacific Light Cable Network
PLDT	Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company
PLEA	Production Loan Easy Access
PMA	Philippine Military Academy
PMO-ERG	Project Management Office-Earthquake Resiliency Group
PMS	Presidential Management Staff
PMS-OSP	PMS-Office for Special Projects
PN	Promissory Note
PNA	Philippine News Agency
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PNP	Philippine National Police
PNPA	Philippine National Police Academy
PNR	Philippine National Railways
POEA	Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
POGO	Philippine Offshore Gaming Operator
PPA	Philippine Ports Authority
PPA	Programs, Projects, or Activities
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Project HOPE	Health Opportunities for People Everywhere
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSG	Presidential Security Group
PSIC	Philippine Standard Industrial Classification
PTOPS	Public Transport Online Processing System
PUBs	Public Utility Buses
PUJs	Public Utility Jeepneys
PUVMP	PUV Modernization Program
PUVs	Public Utility Vehicles
QR Code	Quick Response Code
R&D	Research and Development
R-10	Radial Road 10
RA	Republic Act
RAFPMP	Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program
RAPID Growth	Rural Agro-Industrial Partnership for Inclusive Development and Growth
RATE	Run Against Tax Evaders
RCEF	Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund
RFFA	Rice Farmer Financial Assistance
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
RNA	Ribonucleic Acid
ROK	Republic of Korea
RoRo	Roll-on/Roll-off
RPG	Rocket-Propelled Grenade
RSBSA	Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture
RT-PCR	Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction
RTVM	Radio Television - Malacañang
RWP	Recovery and Wellness Program
SALINTUBIG	Sagana at Ligtas na Tubig sa Lahat
SAP	Social Amelioration Program
SARS-CoV 2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
SCS	South China Sea
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEC	Securities and Exchangge Commission
SETUP	Sarangani Energy Corporation Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program
SFP	Supplementary Feeding Program
SHFC	Social Housing Finance Corporation
SHS	Senior High School
SIBOL	Surgical Innovation and Biotechnology
SIMEX	Simulation Exercise
SLEX	South Luzon Expressway
SLEX TR4	SLEX Toll Road 4
SLMs	Self-Learning Modules
SLP	Student Loan Program
SLP	Sustainable Livelihood Program
SMC	San Miguel Corporation
SMS	Short Message Service
SOCCSKSAR-GEN	South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, General Santos City
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SOS	Safe and Open Spaces
SPES	Special Program for Employment of Students
SPISC	Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens
SPL	Sangay ng Partido sa Localidad
sq.m	Square Meter
SRP	Suggested Retail Price
SSS	Social Security System
STAR	Southern Tagalog Arterial Road
STEP	Special Training for Employment Program
STUFAP	Student Financial Assistance Program
SUCs	State Universities and Colleges
SURE	Survival and Recovery Assistance Program
SURE COV-ID-19	Expanded SURE Aid and Recovery Project for Agri-based MSEs
SWDI	Social Welfare and Development Indicators
SY	School Year
T3	Test, Trace, and Treat

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Tb	Terabit
TCA	Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement
Tech4ED	Technology for Education, Employment, Entrepreneurs, and Economic Development
TES	Tertiary Education Subsidy
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TLE	Technology and Livelihood Education
TNVS	Transport Network Vehicle Service
TPLEx	Tarlac–Pangasinan–La Union Expressway
TRAIN	Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Law
TRC	Treatment and Rehabilitation Center
TTMF	Temporary Treatment and Monitoring Facilities
TUPAD	Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers
TUPAD #BKBK	TUPAD Barangay Ko, Bahay Ko Disinfection/Sanitation Project
TuTi	"Tullahan-Tinajeros River System"
TV	Television
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVL	Technical Vocational Livelihood
TWG	Technical Working Group
TWSP	Training for Work Scholarship Program
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAP	Urban Agriculture Program
UAQTEA	Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UHC	Universal Health Care
UCMED	University of Cebu Medical Center
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfer Program
UH-1	Utility Helicopter-1
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	University of the Philippines
UP-NIH	University of the Philippines-National Institutes of Health
UP-PLA-NADES	University of the Philippines-Planning and Development Research Foundation, Inc.
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
UV	Utility Vehicles
VCO	Virgin Coconut Oil
WFH	Work-from-Home
WHO	World Health Organization
WiFi	Wireless Fidelity
WVF	West Valley Fault