

Problems and Prospects of Philippine Human Development

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The state of the Philippines economic and human development was summarized in the Asia-Pacific Human Development Report 2006 on "Trade and Human Development, The Asia-Pacific Experience" (p. 48) as follows:

"The share of manufacturing output and export of high tech, skill intensive products rose, while that of labor-intensive products declined... industries shifted towards greater capital intensity. Employment growth rate plummeted even in the presence of faster growth in output.

There was 'jobless growth' both in agriculture and manufacturing. The over-all unemployment rate increase, and labor market conditions probably deteriorated for unskilled workers, the rising gaps between urban and rural income, between capital and labor income and between the incomes of skilled and unskilled workers have led to sharp increase in inequality.

The failure of employment to rise and the growing income disparities imply that the 'trickle down' effect of fast trade and income growth on human development and poverty reduction is limited."

Now that the country is showing signs of recovery and progress, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP 2011-2016) admitted "that the trade-off between growth and inequality commonly observed in other countries still raises no policy dilemma in the Philippines whose low growth has been accompanied by increasing high inequality.... Low growth, weak employment generation and persistently high inequality are the immediate reasons for the failure of inclusive growth in the country.

Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016

The PDP 2011-2016 is focused in achieving economic development in pursuit of inclusive growth and human development. It has committed itself to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) on poverty, gender and equality, child health, disease control and sanitation. This is in addition to providing quality social service delivery in education, training and culture, health and nutrition, population and development, housing, social protection, and asset reform. Focus is on the delivery of social services in poorer regions and vulnerable sectors.

The specific targets of the PDP 2011-2016 in attaining exclusive growth are aimed on the following:

1. Reduced poverty incidence 16.6 percent in 2015 from 33.1 percent in 1991.
2. Employment creation of 1 million jobs annually.
3. GDP growth rate of 7-8 percent per year; and
4. Increased ratio of investments to GDP from 15.6 percent in 2010 to 22 percent in 2016.

The PDP's broad strategies are enumerated as follows:

1. Attain a high and sustained economic growth that provides employment opportunities. To achieve this, structural changes shall be implemented with high growth rates and given the right policies, economic gains will translate into higher per capita income and effectively reduce poverty.¹
2. Equalize access to development opportunities across geographic areas and across different income and social spectrum through quality education and primary health care, leveling the playing field through equal access to credit, infrastructure and land,

¹Lead discussant, Conference on "Making Philippine Development Work for the Poor" (*Kung uunlad ba ang Pilipinas, uunlad din ba ang Pilipino?*) Bayview Hotel, Manila, December 17-18, 2013, sponsored by the Philippine Employer-Labor Social Partners, Inc. (PELSPI) and LOFTF.

- and improved governance. This will ensure that expansion of employment opportunities to translate poverty reduction; and
3. Formulate and implement effective and responsive social safety nets to catch those who are unable to immediately participate in this new economic growth. The social safety nets will support and capacitate the vulnerable sectors or society in addressing not only poverty but also the devastating effects of climate change.

State of Human Development

The PDP stressed that human development, or “investment in human resources is the key to sustained and broad-based growth”. It pledged to provide equitable access to basic social services. Under the Social Development plans of the PDP, the priority objectives include: a) attaining the MGDs; b) providing conditional cash transfers (CCT) to the poor; c) achieving universal coverage in health and basic education; d) adopting the community-driven development (CCD) approach; e) converging social protection programs for priority beneficiaries and target areas; f) accelerating asset reform; g) mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in social development ; h) mainstreaming gender and development²; i) strengthening civil society-basic sector participation and public-private partnership;j) adopting volunteerism; and k) developing and enhancing competence of the bureaucracy and institutions.

According to the PDP’s assessment on the MGDs, the country is confident to meet the goals in food poverty, gender equality in education, child mortality, malaria, tuberculosis, and access to sanitary toilet facilities. On the other hand, the country lags behind in achieving universal primary education, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS.

The P2-trillion government budget in 2013 gave social services the highest priority at 35% or P698.4 billion. Economic services got 25%

²According to DOLE BLES statistics in 2010, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector was 40.6% in 1991 which increase slightly to 41.9% in 2009.

(P510.9 billion) and debt service 16.7% (P333.9 billion). The Department of Education (DepEd) retained the biggest allocation at P229.7 billion (14.6%). Other line departments directly involved in social services were allotted the following budgets: Department of Agriculture, P74.1 billion (3.7%); Department of Health, P56.2 billion (2.8%); and Department of Social Transfer (CCT) program with a budget of P44.5 billion (2.2%) and targets 3.8 billion poor families. The Philhealth program was allotted a P12.6 billion budget for 5.2 million poor families. The DepEd shall implement the K+12 program which will add 2 more years to high school and compulsory kindergarten (Yamsuan, 2012).

Poverty Situation

The country's poverty incidence of families has shown slight improvement which declined from 25.4% in 2000 to 20.9% in 2009, or from 33% of the population in 2000 to 26.5% in 2009 (World Bank 2005 in NEDA 2011). This performance is still far from the MPDG targeted at 16.6% in 2015. This can still be achieved provided, according to PSP, determined efforts had to be increasing population, the number of poor families and persons has actually increased despite increase in economic growth. Philippines economic growth thus, by far, has largely by passed the poor (NEDA, 2011, p.21)

Using the US\$1.25 per day poverty threshold, the country had a headcount poverty index of 22.6% which is better than Cambodia (40.2%), Lao PDR (35.7%) and Vietnam (22.8%). However, Indonesia fared better (at 21.4%), Malaysia (.05%) and Thailand (0.4%). Income inequality in the country as measured by Gini ratio is high at 0.448³. Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, and Thailand performed better than the Philippines. In 2009, the regions with the most unequal income distribution with Gini ratios higher than 0.45 are: Regions 7 (Central Visayas - 0.4601); 8 (Eastern Visayas - 0.4841); 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula - 0.4738); 10 (Northern Mindanao - 0.4737); and 13 (CARAGA - 0.4595).⁴

³Gini ratio is used to measure the inequality of income distribution, with zero means perfect equality and a value of 1 means perfect inequality

⁴ARMM- Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao

The Economist (2005) noted the great disparities in ownership of assets, in income, in levels of technology in production and in the geographical concentration of activity. The National Capital Region (NCR) produced and in the one-third of GDP. Being the richest region, income per head was nine times that in the poorest region in 2001. Disparity is evident between the richest and poorest households. In 2000, the richest 10% of the population had an income 23 times that of the poorest 10%.

In 2006, the country's poverty incidence rates were 26.9% of families and 32.9% of population. NCR accounted only 7.1% poverty among families and 10.4% of population. In contrast, the poorest regions with more than 50% poverty incidence of population included: ARMM, 61.8% (of population) and 55.3% (of families); Region IV-B MIMAROPA, 52.7% and 43.75%; Caraga, 52.6% and 45.5%; and Region V- Bicol, 51.1% and 41.8% respectively. Also in 2006, the poorest among the poor basic sectors were the fisherfolks at 49.9% poverty incidence, and farmers at 44%. The least poor sectors were the urban poor at 16.1% and the migrant and formal sector workers at 19.5% (DOLE, 2010).

The income poverty measures by regions was shown in terms of income gap, poverty gap, and severity of poverty⁵. In 2009, the highest income gap at 30.8% was in Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula) while the lowest income gap at 0.4% with Region 13 (CARAGA) with the highest poverty gap at 12.1% (NEDA, 2011).

The country's rank under UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI)⁶ is in the medium category at 105 among 182 countries. The Philippines showed slight improvement from 0.744 in 2005 to 0.751 in 2007. The country slid down in the Gender Empowerment Index (GDI) from 0.768 in 2005 to 0.748 in 2007 and also in Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) 0.590 in 2005 to 0.560 in 2007 (NEDA, 2011).

⁵Income gap means the average income shortfall expressed as a proportion to the poverty line of families with income below the poverty threshold. Poverty gap is the total income shortfall of families with income below the poverty threshold, divided by the total number of families

⁶The HDI measures quality of life or wellbeing measuring health, education and income.

Education, Training and Culture

PDP's major reform agenda in education is called Basic Sector Reform Agenda (BESRA). It involves the following components: school-based management ; enhanced learning efficiency (like K+12 system); quality assurance and accountability; and complementary learning interventions (like alternative learning systems, early childhood education, etc.)

While DepEd continues to get the highest budget among line agencies, the country has fallen short in accomplishing the MDGs and Education for All (EFA) target in enrollment rate and cohort survival rate, the enrolment rate dropped from 85% in late 2000 from a high 97% in 1999-2000. The cohort survival rate stayed at 70% in 1990s and improved only to 70-75% range in 2000s. The country recorded 72.2% elementary targeted at 81% in 2015. But on the secondary level completion rate EFA target of 75.27%, the country attained 73.7% in 2009. As for the Formal Basic Education Performance Indicators from 2004 to 2009, despite free education at the primary and secondary levels, the drop-out rates remain high at 6.35 and 8.0% respectively. This was caused by poverty, poor health, peace and order problems, and child labor⁷. The National Achievement Test (NAT) results improved from a mean percentage score (MPS) of 58.7 in 2004 to 68.0 in 2009. However, the NAT NOS in high school declined a little from 46.8 in 2004 to 45.6 in 2009.

The classroom gap was reduced from 2004 to 2010 with the construction of 76,710 new classrooms. Classrooms shortage remains due to population increase and natural disasters. The classrooms shortage in 2011 was estimated at 113,000. The average teacher-student ratios in 2009-2010 were 1:38 in high school. In 2008, only 227 barangays have no access to an elementary. In 2001, barangays with no access to primary school was 1,617. For high schools, instead of building or expanding existing schools, the Education Service Contracting scheme and the Education Voucher was instituted to enroll poor students in private schools instead. This scheme

⁷The number of working children (5-17 years old) decreased from 2.3 million in 2007 in Oct. 2010. Working children aged 2-9 years likewise decreased from 120,200 to 64,000 during the same period (DOLE, 2010).

managed to enroll 153,694 grantees out of 250,000 targeted beneficiaries from 2004 to 2009.

The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Law as implemented in all cities and in 99% of provinces. The enrolment rate of 4-5 years old in private and public pre-school education was provided to 1.4 million children. Grade 1 pupils became better prepared with ECCD experience whose number increased from 56% in 2004 to 64.6% in 2008.

For those who missed school, the nonschool-based alternative learning system (ALS) of DepED and other providers has enrolled 631, 914 and 418, 108 respectively from 2005 to 2009. These mechanisms helped increase functional literacy in the country. About 58 million of the 67 million Filipinos aged 10 to 64 years of age (86%) were functionally literate. Basic literacy is estimated at 95.6%. aside from the educational system, the family, media, NGOs, religious missionaries, rebel and the ALS system have contributed to this effort in increasing literacy among Filipinos.

While basic education in the Philippines is accessible to all with free tuition fees, higher education is deregulated and administered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Most institutions of higher learning are privately owned and driven by market demand. Recent trends show big private enterprises have been buying into colleges and universities to augment their HRD needs. This, in a way, helped bridge industry directly with the academe.

Industry and professional associations have also contributed to the capacity building efforts in the industry sector. These training efforts include those of the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP), Center of Labor Education and Advocacy Research and Development, Inc. (CLEARED), Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Philippine Society for Quality, Philippine Association of Labor-Management Cooperation Professionals, (Philamcop), Philippine Employer-Labor Social Partners, Inc. (PELSPI), trade union centers like FFW, TUCP, Partido ng Manggagawa (PM), various corporate foundations, etc. (Sibal, 2006).

The state colleges and universities offer courses that are needed for developmental purpose such as agriculture, fisheries, and oceanography, engineering and other basics and applied sciences. Public educational institutions of higher learning provide access to poor students who wish to pursue higher learning in college and graduate studies. Aside from state subsidy, there are also privately-funded scholarships and student financial assistance available. The CHED has recently rationalized and streamlined its student financial program (StuFAPs).

Higher education enrolment increased moderately from 2.4 million in 2004 to 2.62 million in 2009. Graduates likewise increased from 409,629 to 469,654 during the same period, or an increase by 14.65%. Unlike in the past, college education is not a guarantee for finding jobs. Unemployed college graduates and post graduates number 512,000 in 2008 which increased to 555,000 in July 2010. Unemployment among college undergraduates during the same period also increased from 574,000 to 614,000 (DOLE, 2010).

The enrollment data in tertiary level education from 2004-2009. The 2007 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) showed that college dropouts especially since tuition fee adjustment has been deregulated under CHED's supervision.

The technical and vocational educational and training (TVET) system administered by the Technical Skills Development Authority (TESDA) under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) augment the HRD efforts of colleges and universities and enterprises. Enrollment in TVET courses under TESDA increased from 1.68 million in 2004 to 1.98 million in 2009. The absorption rate of TVET graduates according to a 2008 Impact Evaluation Study (IES) was 55.1% which was lower than the 2005 data of 64.6%. The main factors for the said decline were: the global financial crisis and job losses; and skills mismatch and geographical mismatch (NEDA, 2011).

A major innovation in the tertiary education system is the institution of ladderized education programs between TVET institutions

and colleges and universities through EO 358 in 2005. These programs include information technology (IT), hotel and restaurant management and tourism (now more popular than nursing), engineering, health, education, maritime, agriculture and criminology. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) has exerted its scholarship program in the fields of basic and applied sciences. In 2009, 4,927 students were qualified nationwide and increased the total number of DOST scholars to 11,428.

TESDA implemented a mandatory assessment of TVET graduates in order to assure quality graduates. Of the 836, 131 graduates in 2009, 83.62% or 690,836 workers were certified across all occupations. This assessment program has contributed to the employability of TVET graduates locally and overseas.

According to the PDP, the education and training sectors are confronted with the following issues and challenges: a) limited participation of the industry sector in developing competency standards and curricula; b) societal bias against TVET and insufficient social marketing, particularly among basic education students and their parents; c) the need to upgrade the quality of higher education programs, including S&T courses; and make them internationally comparable; and d) continuing job-skills mismatches owing to low quality and relevance of education, training programs, alongside lower absorptive capacity of the economy (NEDA, 2011).

In the field of culture and sports, the PDP cited the following accomplishments: a) the National Heritage Act (RA 10066) of 1999 aimed to protect, preserve, conserve and promote the nation's cultural heritage, and histories, strengthen cultural institutions; protect cultural workers and ensure their cultural professional development and wellbeing; and b) the Short-Term Philippine Sports Development Plan 2008-2010 under NEDA-Social Development Committee aimed at systematizing institutional reforms and rationalizing by the National Endowment Fund for Culture and Arts (NEFCA). In sports development, most of the institutional reforms were not implemented due to change in national leadership.

What seems to be lacking in the field of cultural development is the promotion of nationalism especially by the state during the past and present administrations. There is no nation on earth, or a tiger economy is Asia that has industrialized without the values of patriotism and nationalism. The last administration that has promoted nationalism as essential component in the development process was the Filipino Policy of President Carlos P. Garcia. While past and present administrations have only played lip service to the values of nationalism to industrialization, many civil society organizations have continued to advocate economic and cultural nationalism, notably the Fair Trade Alliance (FTA), the Philippine Employer-Labor Social Partners, Inc. (PELSPI), and others.

Health, Nutrition and Population

The PDP reported that the country's total health expenditure was only P234.3 billion, or 3.2% of GDP which was below the World Health Organization's (WHO) standard or 5% for developing countries. According to the 2007 Philippine National Health Accounts (PNHA), 54% of the total health expenses came from out-of-pocket expenses or unplanned, and only 9% came from social health insurance. This means that the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC) has to increase its enrolment coverage, availment of its benefits and value for its claims.

While the Philippines is known for globally competitive medical and health workforce and facilities, many public hospitals and primary health facilities are not able to provide adequate services and quality care. Health workers and facilities are concentrated in the urban areas while the far-flung and depressed areas are underserved. Data show that 997 of 1,073 are DOH-licensed by PHIC. Once the PhilHealth raises its accreditation to global standards, these ratios will definitely decline and will further disadvantage the poor.

The poor performance of government hospitals and health facilities are caused by the following factors: a) backlogs in upgrading of existing facilities, including those required to make public hospitals safe from

disasters; and b) inability of the total capacity of public health facilities to meet the demands from an increasing population base (NEDA, 2011).

Nutrition and underweight children continue to be serious Philippine problems. Underweight children below 5 years of age decreased from 27.3% in 1990 to 20.6% in 2008 but this is way below the 2015 MDG of 13.7%. Added to these stunting⁸ (32.3%) and wasting⁹ (7.5%) which are at high levels (Table 7). Thinness also prevails among school children at 8.1%. About 26% pregnant women are nutritionally at-risk, with low weight-for-weight levels.

Overweight and obesity among adults is common at 26.6% based on the 2008 National Nutrition Survey. Even children below 5 years old were becoming overweight and obese whose increase was recorded at 3 times from 1.1% in 1990 to 3.5% in 2008. This was based among 6-10 years old, the increase during the same period was from 0.1% to 2008. This was based on International Reference Standards. Another health concerns is micronutrient deficiencies among young children and pregnant women. Around 15.2% of children below 5 years old were deficient in Vitamin A (FNRI 2008). Based on WHO classification, iron deficiency remains high as follows: 55.7% among infants 6-11 months old; 41% among children 12-23 months; and 42.5% among pregnant women. Iodine deficiency among pregnancy and lactating women at an average of 105 ug/L is not within the WHO recommended level of 150 ug/L.

Virola (2006) cited data from the United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Philippines Statistical System (PPS): a) on food availability, the Philippines was ahead of Thailand, Vietnam, Lao PDR and Cambodia in 1990-1992. By 2000-2002, Vietnam and Thailand caught up with the Philippines and Lao PDR is getting close; b) The country's incidence of undernourishment was higher than the whole Asia and the Pacific; and c) the country has shown modest improvement in addressing poverty and hunger but the Asian neighbors have succeeded

⁸Stunting of children under 5 years old is an indication of prolonged deprivation of food and frequent bouts of infections.

⁹Wasting is an indication of lack of food or infection in the immediate past.

at faster rates and overtaken the country's record. Hunger, which showed slight decline, remained to be a problem. Inadequate caloric intake of households decreased from 69.4% in 1990 to 66.9% in 2008. The subsistence¹⁰ of families likewise decreased from 8.7% in 2006 to 7.9% in 2009.

Population Growth Rate (PGR) is still high at 2.04%, adding 1.8 million Filipinos every year. Aside from high unemployment and underemployment, a high PGR also contributes to high dependency ratio at 6.9% as of 2000. Every 100 person in the labor force (15-64 years of age) have to support 63 young dependents and 6 elderly dependents. High dependency rate leads to low savings among households. Added to the population problem is a high fertility rate of 3.3 children which exceed the desired level of 2.4 children. Fertility rates are higher among women of lower educational attainment and incomes. The country's contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) based on the 2008 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) was only 51%.

The numerous tasks facing the Department of Health (DOH) include improving the local health facilities and medical centers, and medical centers, preventive measure to reduce non communicable diseases like diabetes mellitus, hypertension and trauma. Improving the health information system is also needed which includes research. The health situation in the country can be seen in the health accomplishments of the MGDs. The PDP is confident in accomplishing most the health related MGDs. However, the slow decline in neonatal mortality which caused most of infant deaths has been noted. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) and infant mortality rate (IMR) were at 95 to 163 per 100,000 live births in 2008 (NSO 2008) as against the MDG of 52 and 19 respectively. The main interventions in the country's health problems are the increase in coverage of PhilHealth and the CCT for pregnancy check-up in health centers.

¹⁰Subsistence incidence refers to the proportion of families (or population) with per capita income less than the per capita food threshold to the total number of families (or population) (NSCB).

Housing and Urban Development

The total housing need is projected to reach 5.8 million in 2016. Almost half of the housing backlog is in the fast developing regions – NCR, Region IV-A (Calabarzon) and Region III (Central Luzon). This is explained by the rapid increase in informal settlement households in the urban areas which grew by 62.25% from 2000 to 2006. In Metro Manila, the said growth during the same period was 81.13% (FIES, NSO). While the MDGs in drinking water and sanitary toilets have been accomplished, informal settlers have limited access to safe water and proper waste disposal.

The problem of housing back-log is caused by the high inland migration due to uneven and regional growth patterns. This problem is enhanced by the following factors: low compliance with the Urban Development and Housing Act which mandates an allocation of at least 20% of total project cost to socialized housing; and limited access of the poor housing loan facilities of the social insurance system.

The main government housing strategy is to give incentive to developers who serve the formal sector (middle and high level) housing market. With a big housing needs of 3.7 million as of 2010, 812,462 housing units were produced from 2004 to 2010. Socialized housing for the poor is addressed by the government through National Housing Authority (NHA), Community Mortgage Program (CMP), Retail and Developmental Financing (HDMF, LBP, SSS, DBP, and GSIS), and Provision of Secure Tenure Proclamation.

The government has indirect housing accomplishments through retail and development guaranties, issuance of license to sell, and assistance to comprehensive land use planning. The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) guaranteed 168,347 housing loans against a target of 275,649, or 61% accomplishment rate. The Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) issued 1.29 million licenses-to-sell which exceed its target at 126%. Further, the HLURB assisted 419 LGUs in formulating and updating their Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUPs) against a target of 432.

Additional government accomplishments included the following: a) loan interest rate reduction that brought down the lowest socialized housing packages to 3% per annum; b) extension of payment terms for all housing loans from 25 to 30 years; c) reduction of loan requirements from 15 to; and d) reduction of loan processing time from 3 months to 7 working days for developers accounts with buyer guarantee, and 30 days for retail and developer accounts without buy-back guarantee (PDP 2011-2016).

As observed by Ballesteros (2010) on the PDP, the government efforts have not really addressed the basic housing problems on constraints in land supply and financing, weak institutional mechanisms in housing construction, and unclear focus on poverty reduction. Ballesteros recommended further strengthening of the HGC via substantial private and government sectors.

Social Protection

Social protection includes policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerability to risks and in enhancing the social status of the marginalized. It has four components: a) enhancing employment opportunities and protecting workers rights and welfare; b) social insurance; c) social welfare; and d) social safety nets.

The country's poverty incidence and the number of poor in all sectors increased between 2003 and 2006 despite the country's moderate growth for more than a decade (Aldaba and Hermoso, 2010). The highest poverty incidence in 2006 is present among fishermen (49.9%), farmers (44%), working children (40.8%), women (30.1%) and youth (25.4%). The most empowered among the poor sectors are the urban poor (16.1%) migrant and formal sector workers (19.5%) where the trade unions and labor organizations are active. Social protection especially among the poorest of poor and the vulnerable has been the target of state interventions, with focus in the Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT) and the universal PhilHealth and social security coverage.

As evidence by an increasing number vulnerable households from 36.2% in 2003 to 50.7% in 2006¹¹, the PDP also noted that social protection interventions in the country are inadequate and not very effective. This can be further gleaned from the coping up mechanisms resorted by poor households that erode human capital like reducing food consumption, dropping out children from school, reducing health care expenses, selling assets and exhausting savings, etc. Other observations¹² include inadequate funding, poor coordination and multiplicity in public social protection mechanisms, weak targeting of beneficiaries, lack of monitoring and evaluation, limited coverage of social security system like SSS, PhilHealth, GSIS, etc.

The PDP acknowledges the above shortcomings of the current government social protection programs and cited the examples of the National Food Authority (NFA) where targeting resulted to the rice distributed to the non-poor, undercoverage to the poor low impact and high wastage. The PDP also acknowledges the successful government – NGO-private sector partnership in the development of social protection programs. But it noted that some sectors such as the disabled and the elderly are left behind based on an ADB study in 2009. Many programs lack built-in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In addition to the lack of coverage in the formal sector, social protection coverage is also wanting in the formal sector workers especially among the contractual and project-based employment and migrant workers.

Fisherfolks and farmers are the poorest among the basic sectors. Majority are informal sector workers, mostly own account and unpaid family workers. In addition to the weak state social protection to these sectors, the low growth in poor regions dominated by farming and fisheries industries has resulted to high population growth, high incidence of child labor, high dropout rates in education, high underemployment, high in-migration to the urban areas, high maternal problems and mortality,

¹¹Households become vulnerable if the probability of their becoming poor is greater than the national poverty incidence.

¹²The PDP cited the following researches: DAP, 2009; Manasan, 2009; Weigand & Grosh Survey 2008; and ADB, 2009.

high in communicable diseases, and other social, political and economic problems.

Aside from child workers, others in difficult situation are street children, victims, of child abuse and commercial sexual exploitation like prostitution and pornography, children involved in criminal activities, children in situations of armed conflict, and victims of illegal recruitment and trafficking. Working children aged 5 to 17 number 2.1 million. Majority are males aged 15-17 years old. Most of these working compared with their male counterpart. Some women continue to suffer from violence, wife battering and other difficult circumstances but there is a decreasing trend due to RA 9262 which penalizes abusive husbands and live-in partners.

Among the major improvement in the government's interventions in social protection is the convergence in the implementation of major programs like the CCT Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) and Self Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran (SEA-K) which shall cover 53 provinces. Another is the updating of the data of the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) by 2014 identification of around 5.6 million poor households. ADB's latest evaluation of the CCT showed that the program was "well-designed safety nets... that could effectively reduce the depth and severity of poverty and inequality", adding the programs cost only 0.5% of the GDP that reaches 15 million people.