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UNDP IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Republic of the Philippines consist of an archipelago of over 7,000 islands in Pacific Ocean and is ranked as a Lower Middle-Income Country category. The Philippine economy has seen several years of robust growth with average annual GDP growth of over 6 per cent in recent years. The Philippines ranks 116th out of 188 countries in the Human Development Index (medium human development) and 96th in the Gender Inequality Index. The Philippines also has one of the highest levels of inequality in South East Asia and despite recent reductions, poverty stills stands at 21.6 percent, 22 million people.

In addition, The Philippines faces numerous environmental and natural disaster challenges, and is ranked one of the most hit countries by climate change. In 2013 the country was hit by the largest typhoon on record, Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) which 6,300 people and affected 15 million.

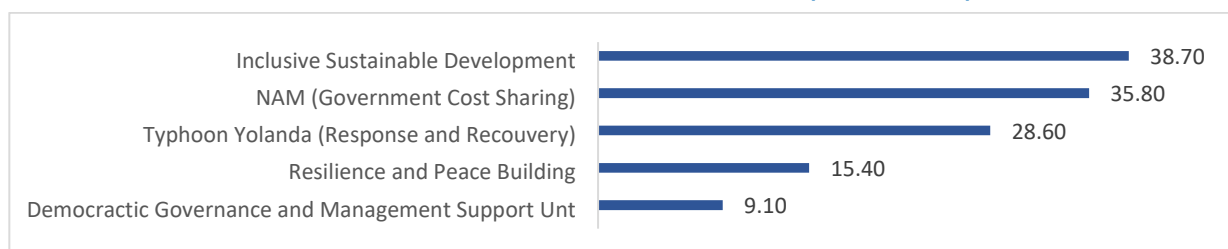
Poverty levels are highest in the conflict hit regional of Mindanao which is now subject to an ongoing peace process and the movement towards Autonomy under the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

UNDP's Country Programme has focused on Inclusive Sustainable Development, with a large environment portfolio, Governance and Resilience and Peace Building. Following Typhoon Pablo (2012) and Yolanda (2013) and other natural disasters, UNDP has supported the Philippines government in its response and recovery work. In recent years UNDP has also partnered closely with the Government in public service delivery under a number of Government Cost sharing projects.

The IEO conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP's development contribution from 2012 to 2017.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2012-2016: \$128 MILLION

PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2012–2016 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP activities and interventions have been strongly aligned with the Philippine Government's priorities and development plans over the CPD period. UNDP has also ensured that these government priorities as well as the goals of UNDP have been strengthened at decentralized levels and within communities. This is in no small part due to the strong oversight of ODA given by the government through the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the partnership UNDP has with NEDA in coordinating areas of development support.

Typhoon Yolanda (2013) and several preceding typhoons and disasters illustrated UNDP's positioning as a key partner for disaster response and recovery within the Philippines. Support was

coordinated in line with local government and community needs and saw a smooth move from response to recovery.

The Philippines will continue to bear the brunt of climate change impact and has built strong central institutional capacity, coordination mechanisms and structures to address disaster risk management issues and challenges. There is still opportunity for UNDP to support and strengthen this area, bringing international and national experience in DRM to build stronger preparedness and response capacities.

UNDP has pursued, agreed and entered into initial government costs sharing agreement projects quickly which is to their credit. In some cases project prerequisites were not in place and a more detailed

risk analysis or assessment was not undertaken, which has been highlighted by delays and issues once projects were implemented. UNDP has identified a considerable opportunity and need in its support to the Government of the Philippines in the accelerated delivery of a range of government services through the national acceleration modality and did well to secure the opportunity.

Areas of crosscutting and strategic focus of UNDP have not been adequately addressed during the CPD period. UNDP has strengthened many external partnerships especially with CSOs and academia across a range of programmatic areas.

South-South cooperation has been ad hoc in its implementation and has not been strategically focused in supporting the Philippines for learning from experience in the region or globally. Equally the Philippines offers numerous lessons for other countries in disaster

preparedness and response and recovery as well as climate change and environment and natural resource management which are valuable for others in the region and globally. The country office portfolio of programmes has not given strategic priority to gender equality and has not supported the gender focal point or programme officers in ensuring that programmes are gender responsive and transformative but have focused on gender inclusion, to some degree.

Evaluations during the period have been primarily mandatory in nature for environmental and natural resource management activities excluding a number of major portfolios.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- National acceleration modality approaches need to be planned, entered into and implemented within an agreed memorandum of understanding between UNDP and the Government of the Philippines. This should include a clear strategic understanding of technical assistance needs and focus with a strategic vision for UNDP moving out as a service delivery agent and the government acting as primary delivery agent in the future.
- Experience from the response to and recovery from Typhoon Yolanda and other disasters over the period, needs to be consolidated and documented and UNDP Philippines could ensure that this strengthens its own response plan and its coordination role for future disasters as well as feeds into existing and developing Government response, recovery and preparedness work.
- UNDP needs to give greater strategic focus to areas of crosscutting concern to UNDP as a whole including gender, south-south cooperation as well its evaluation of programmes and projects as well as the Country office's coordination with other UN agencies operating in the Philippines.
- UNDP in the Philippines needs to develop a more strategic approach in some areas of intervention, especially aspects of its governance work including human rights issues and support to responsible Philippine institutions, in order to ensure support is optimal and targeted and allows UNDP and Philippine partners to address challenges strategically and sustainably.
- UNDP with the Government of the Philippines should review its current and past interventions and support to the environment, natural resources and climate change, especially those financed through GEF, to ensure that the support is balanced and is addressing the main needs and priorities of current and future policy and strategy priorities to ensure that interventions are meeting key needs and gaps in support are not developing.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP's Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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