Philippines

Key country highlights

• Total land area of 300,000 sq km, encompassing more than 7000 islands.
• Located along the Pacific “Ring of Fire” and the typhoon belt, making it prone to a variety of natural hazards. Ranked 10th in the Global Climate Risk Index 2009.
• Total population of 88.6 million in 2007 with a growth rate of 2.04% annually; 63% of the total population lives in urban areas.
• Lower Middle-income Country with Medium Human Development Index (HDI). The country Gini coefficient since 1997 indicates persistent economic inequalities.

HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

Managing Social and Environmental Determinants for Health: The Philippines’ annual growth rate of 2.04% makes it one of the highest in Asia. As of 2010, 63% of the population were living in urban areas and is expected to increase to 70% by 2015. The percentage of population below the national poverty threshold declined from 45.3% in 1991 to 32.99% in 2006. However, the trend reversed after 2006, largely attributed to the recent global economic crisis, food and fuel price increases, and natural disasters.

The country is prone to a variety of natural hazards and is particularly susceptible to multiple climate change hazards and climate-sensitive diseases such as dengue, malaria, diarrhea and cholera.

Health Status and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): The country faces a double burden of disease characterized by communicable diseases comprising the majority of the 10 leading causes of morbidity while noncommunicable diseases account for most of the 10 leading cause of mortality. Significant improvement has been made in malaria prevention and control. If the decline in TB prevalence is maintained, achieving the STOP TB partnership target of 50% reduction in TB prevalence by 2015 relative to the 1990 level is possible. Meanwhile, HIV prevalence is a concern as the country is one of seven where new cases increased by more than 25% from 2001–2009. The rapid increase in HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs from 0.40% in 2007 to 5% in 2010 is alarming. Progress has been made towards achieving MDG4 (under-5 mortality) though the decline has slowed down largely due mainly to the stagnant neonatal mortality rate. Newborn babies comprise nearly half of the annual under-5 mortality. Meanwhile with a decline of less than 2% per year, the country is at risk of failing to achieve its target to reduce the maternal mortality ratio to 52 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

The Aquino Health Agenda on Universal Health Care as the Government’s continuing commitment to health sector reform and achievement of health-related MDGs.

Sector Development Approach for Health as a mechanism for ensuring alignment of work among development partners towards national health priorities.

Establishment of Philippine Infectious Disease Surveillance and Response (PIDSR) to develop local health systems for surveillance and response.

Department of Health as a recognized leader and resource institution in health emergencies at the regional level (i.e. Asia Pacific).

Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool (Urban HEART) as a planning and response tool for local government units to invest in urban health issues.

OPPORTUNITIES

• The Aquino Health Agenda on Universal Health Care as the Government’s continuing commitment to health sector reform and achievement of health-related MDGs.
• Sector Development Approach for Health as a mechanism for ensuring alignment of work among development partners towards national health priorities.
• Establishment of Philippine Infectious Disease Surveillance and Response (PIDSR) to develop local health systems for surveillance and response.
• Department of Health as a recognized leader and resource institution in health emergencies at the regional level (i.e. Asia Pacific).
• Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool (Urban HEART) as a planning and response tool for local government units to invest in urban health issues.

CHALLENGES

• Vulnerability to disasters and chronic emergencies in Mindanao.
• Assessed as “high risk” with regard to food security.
• Slow reduction in maternal death, slowing of reduction in infant deaths.
• High population growth rate.
• Double burden of disease.
• Widening health inequity; disparity in health service delivery and utilization.
• High out-of-pocket payments and low health expenditure.
• Fragmentation between health financing and service delivery.
• Decentralization of health services.
• Maldistribution of skilled health workers.
• Poor quality of health data and information.

SOURCES:
PARTNERS FOR HEALTH

The Philippine Development Forum serves as the primary mechanism of the Government for facilitating substantive policy dialogue with development partners on the country’s development agenda that is espoused in the medium-term Philippine Development Plan. The forum also serves as a process for developing consensus and generating commitments towards critical actionable items of the Government’s reform agenda. For the health sector, the Department of Health Sector Development Approach for Health (SDAH) is the system for harmonizing and improving implementation of development assistance by strengthening donor coordination.

As part of the United Nations efforts towards “Delivering as One” the 2011–2016 Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) harmonizes with and contributes to the 2012–2018 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). As health and development are closely related, the health-related dimension of development can be seen in areas of interest that support the four UNDAF outcomes.

In the context of aid effectiveness, the WHO country team’s focus in the coming term will be towards:

- improving aid effectiveness in the country through optimum alignment of development partners’ work with that of the national partners’ thrust;
- “Delivering as One” at the technical programme level together with other United Nations agencies through results-based programming to ensure optimal use of resources and capacities; and
- coordinating donor support at the local government unit level for the health sector to ensure complementation and prevent duplication.

STRATEGIC AGENDA FOR WHO COOPERATION

Acknowledging growing concerns about delays in achieving the MDGs and the need to fast track progress within the CCS period, WHO technical cooperation supports the Department of Health’s Universal Health Care Agenda across all levels of the health care system, including the DOH-retained hospitals, the DOH Centers for Health Development (CHDs), and local government units. WHO also brokers joint partnerships in areas where critical actions are required, capitalizing on the strong (though untapped) presence of the private sector, civil society and academia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Priority 1</th>
<th>Main Focus Area 1.1 Enabling national government agencies to deliver universal health care, focusing on health-related MDGs and priority noncommunicable diseases.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Focus Area 1.2 Supporting national and local governments to implement and monitor the health financing strategic interventions in support to achievement of universal health care, particularly ensuring access to essential health entitlements.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Focus Area 1.3 Supporting the generation of accurate and timely information as a basis for legal and policy frameworks for universal health care.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Priority 2</th>
<th>Main Focus Area 2.1 Improving health-seeking behaviour of individuals, families and communities to manage communicable and noncommunicable disease and their risk factors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Focus Area 2.2 Engaging national and local stakeholder, including local government units to address the social and environmental determinants of health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Priority 3</th>
<th>Main Focus Area 3.1 Increasing capacity of key government agencies and local government units to manage health security risks following natural and human-induced disasters.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Focus Area 3.2 Increasing capacity of key government agencies and local government units to manage health security risks due to emerging and re-emerging diseases, food safety-related events and disease outbreaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Main Focus Area 3.3 Increasing capacity of key government agencies and local government units to manage the health impact of climate change.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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