

UNESCAP Fourth Session of the Committee on Social Development

- (1) how the social trends discussed in the background document can be addressed in the country;*
- (2) good practices in terms of the government response to the challenges to integrating the social dimension into the other dimensions of sustainable development; and*
- (3) the data and research gaps in the area of social development in the country and how these can be narrowed*

Based on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Philippines is lagging behind in the following areas: (1) elementary education, in terms of completion rate; (2) gender equality, in terms of women's political participation, and boys being at a disadvantage in elementary and secondary education participation; (3) maternal mortality; (4) access to reproductive health; and (5) HIV/AIDS.

What we need to do is to intensify the implementation of recently approved policies in support of the MDGs and SDGs such as the Reproductive Health Law, which aims to improve the health of Filipino mothers; the enactment of the K to 12 Law, which adds two more years in basic education that will equip learners with skills that will prepare them for the future, whether it be: employment, entrepreneurship, skills development or higher education; and the social protection framework, which provides interventions to minimize the negative effect of economic or environmental risks.

Considering our country's intrinsic vulnerabilities given its geo-characteristics, building resiliency is also a priority. Thus, the need to invest heavily in technology and infrastructure to improve its disaster risk reduction and mitigation systems, including funding for reconstruction in cases of catastrophe. With the huge stock of Filipinos who work and reside abroad, the country is also vulnerable to external shocks. To address this concern, we strongly advocate for national, bilateral, and multilateral arrangements that promote the protection of our Overseas Filipino Workers.

What we have learned from the implementation of the MDGs is that it requires a sustained and consistent commitment by the duty bearer (government), and other stakeholders: private sector, civil society and the international community. Also, the implementation plan should include a financing plan. This is an imperative because addressing inequity in quality of life requires government resources since private resources cannot be expected to provide the good or service to the poor at a price they can afford. Further, the implementation plan should include programs to build socioeconomic resilience, especially of the poor and near poor, against natural and man-made hazards and economic shocks. There should also be a clear assignment of responsibilities consistent with the governance structure.

We also see the need for an appropriate data monitoring system to track our development targets. The data must be available in a timely manner and should be at the level of disaggregation consistent with the assignment of responsibilities for delivering the development target. The timeliness of data reporting is important so that policies and the design of programs and projects can benefit from the latest information. However, this would entail huge financial

resources. That is why we enjoin the international community, including the multilateral agencies, to help fund data collection as well as develop statistical capabilities to be able to monitor the SDGs and their targets.