

## CHAPTER 11

# Ensuring Food Resiliency and Reducing Vulnerabilities of Filipinos

The government has been strengthening its efforts to reduce the vulnerability of Filipinos and ensure that they have the capacity to manage and respond to shocks. The proposed initiatives will improve the accessibility of social protection (SP) programs and address pressing challenges so that Filipinos can continue to pursue their aspirations.

## ASSESSMENT

The SP system played a pivotal role in the country's pandemic management and economic recovery efforts. It allowed the gradual re-opening of the economy without compromising efforts to manage the spread of the virus. Recent key reforms helped Filipinos manage income shocks but many remain vulnerable.

**The country's SP system is being strengthened to build the capacity of Filipinos to manage shocks and provide responsive and timely support when needed.** Republic Act No. 11055 or the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) Act established a national digital ID system that will help facilitate transactions and provide aggregate socioeconomic data for development planning and programming. Linked with bank accounts, the system will also allow for financial inclusion. As of December 31, 2021, more than 50 million individuals were registered with their biometrics captured in PhilSys. As of December 15, 2021, 7,066,476 PhilSys registrants applied for an account with the LANDBANK which co-locates in the registration centers to target the unbanked. The PhilSys will also be interoperable with the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) as established by RA 11315 or the CMBS Act. Now in its pilot phase, the CBMS will be an important tool in identifying marginalized groups and developing responsive development interventions.

Other related legislations recently adopted and implemented include: (a) RA 11223 or the Universal Health Care Law, which mandated PhilHealth coverage of all Filipinos and helped lower out-of-pocket (OOP) spending from 42.0 percent in 2019 to 39.9 percent in 2020; (b) RA 11310 or the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps) Act, which institutionalized and enhanced<sup>1</sup> the conditional cash transfer program, and increased its budget from PHP89.40 billion in 2018 to PHP106.80 billion in 2021; and (c) RA 11199 or

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<sup>1</sup> It increased the cash transfer amount on health grants and educational grants to high school students.

the Social Security Act of 2018, which strengthened the Social Security System (SSS) and mandated the provision of unemployment benefits which benefitted 220,443 individuals from 2019 to 2021. These programs are crucial components of the Social Protection Floor (SPF), which is being finalized. When implemented, the SPF will ensure the availability of adequate support to all individuals across their lifecycle.

**SP programs that address poverty and help manage risks to income shocks are implemented, but coverage remains low.** The SP system has programs<sup>2</sup> that can address income shocks due to disasters, economic, and individual lifecycle risks. While these programs help reduce poverty, 5.12 percent of Filipinos still experienced severe food insecurity in 2019, and about 597,000 children engaged in child labor in 2020 to augment their family's income.

Concerns that prevent some Filipinos from accessing SP programs include lack of awareness, participation costs, and administrative challenges (including targeting and logistical issues). Only 84 percent of Filipino families have members with social insurance in 2020, and 32.56 percent of the economically active population have SSS coverage in 2021.

**Disasters still result in deaths and missing persons.** Policies and guidelines were issued to standardize community-based disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), earthquake drills, and the establishment, operationalization, and management of the Emergency Operations Center, among others. Quarterly Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill and regular DRRM webinars were also conducted to promote proactive disaster preparedness among individuals. However, there are still pressing challenges that need to be addressed such as the socioeconomic factors that increase the vulnerability of individuals, the adaptive capacity of communities, and coordination and capacity limitations among stakeholders and multi-sectoral partners, among others.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Includes PhilHealth, SSS, GSIS, DSWD's Social Amelioration Program, Cash-for-Work, Emergency Shelter Assistance, 4Ps, Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens, DOLE's Integrated Livelihood Program and Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD)

<sup>3</sup> National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan 2020-2030

## IN FOCUS: BONEL ALVAREZ, FATHER AND PRIMARY PROVIDER



*Bonel Alvarez is a 40-year-old tricycle driver from Isla Puting Bato, Tondo, Manila.*

*He is a household head with four children, and earns approximately PHP300 to PHP500 per day. One of his children has a disability. His father, a social pension beneficiary, is living with Bonel's family, and his pension is often spent for the entire household's needs.*

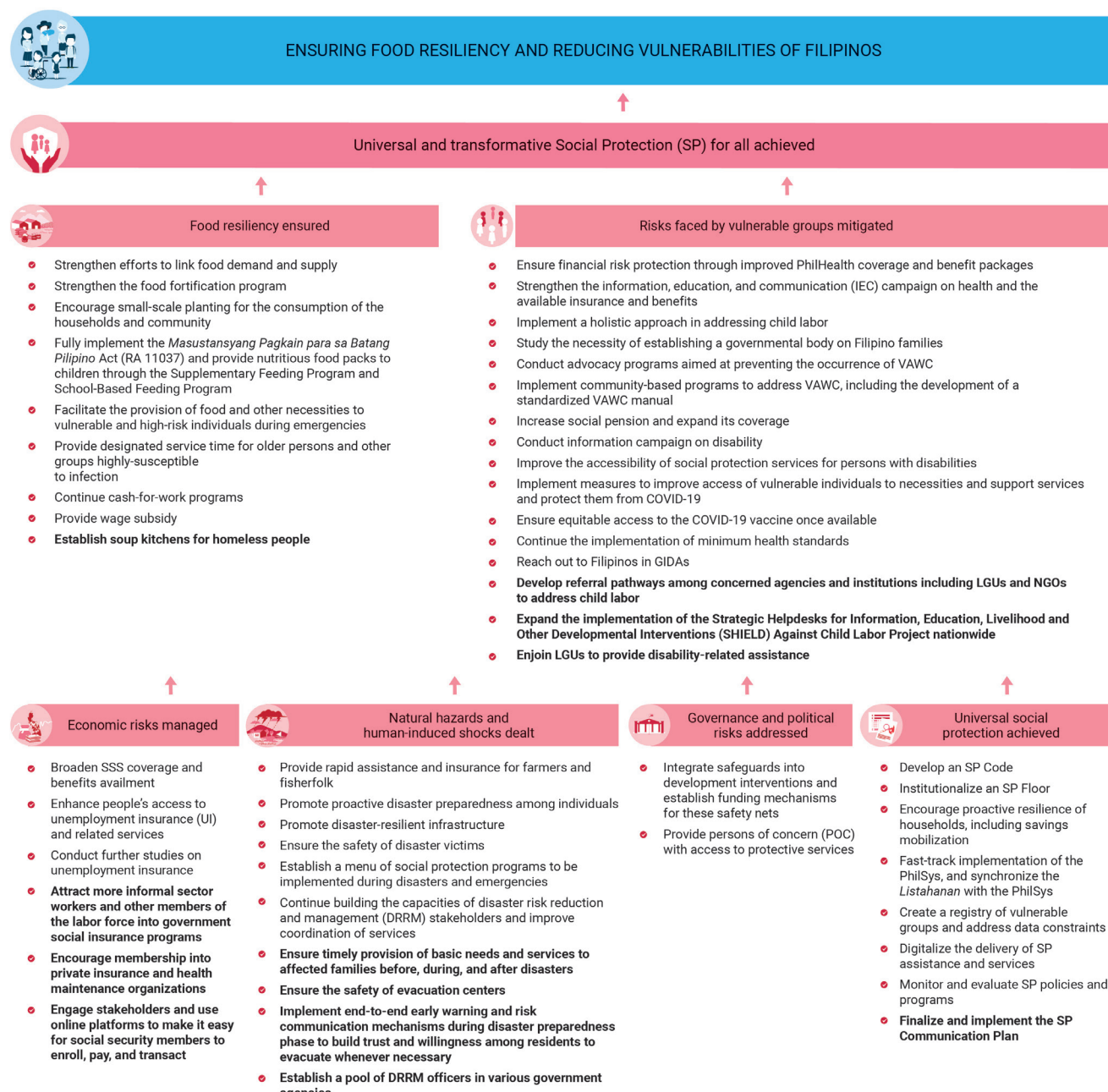
*Bonel wants to enjoy life and see his children graduate from college. He dreams of having a small and sustainable business and sufficient savings for emergencies and education and health-related expenses.*

*However, his family often has to tighten their belts whenever they experience income shocks because of sickness and disruptions at work (e.g., natural disasters and frequent lockdowns due to the pandemic). Disability-related costs also place a significant burden on their resources. Moreover, his wife is not able to work since she is the one who takes care of their child with a disability. One of his children even engages in child labor to help their family earn income during difficult times. The occurrence of natural disasters also displaces their household now and then.*

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Many Filipinos face the challenges experienced by Bonel and his family. To address their vulnerabilities, and ensure their capacity to manage shocks, the government will continue to implement and adopt new food resiliency and social protection strategies at the national and local levels.

**Figure 11.1. Strategic Framework to Ensure Food Resiliency and Reduce Vulnerabilities of Filipinos**



Note: Text in bold are revised/new strategies to address the challenges identified in the sector.



# STRATEGIES

The government has already implemented many of the strategies identified in the Updated PDP 2017-2022. Highlighted below are the new strategies that enhance the accessibility of SP programs and address the pressing challenges faced by Filipinos.

## TO ENSURE FOOD RESILIENCY

**Establish community kitchens for vulnerable Filipinos.** Local government units will establish community kitchens for nutritionally at-risk families and underprivileged individuals, particularly the homeless. Such establishments can help achieve the objectives of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN), especially during disasters and emergencies.<sup>4</sup> Similar feeding initiatives from non-government and civil society organizations will also be encouraged. (See [Box Article 11.1](#))

## TO MITIGATE RISKS FACED BY VULNERABLE GROUPS

**Develop referral pathways among concerned agencies and institutions including local government units (LGU) and non-government organizations to address child labor.** The National Council against Child Labor and its member agencies will formulate a referral mechanism and case management system to respond to child labor concerns. The referral pathway includes services and assistance to children in the worst forms of child labor.

**Expand the implementation of the Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood and Other Developmental Interventions (SHIELD) Against Child Labor Project nationwide.** The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will roll out the SHIELD project across all regions in the country. The project aims to strengthen efforts at the local level, including the establishment of a help desk and a local registry on child labor.

**Enjoin LGUs to provide disability-related assistance.** Disability entails direct (e.g., cost of assistive devices, rehabilitation services) and indirect costs (e.g., unemployment, carer's foregone earning) to persons with disabilities and their family. LGUs are encouraged to be more proactive in identifying and addressing varied contextual barriers faced by persons with disabilities. With this, it is important to provide disability-related assistance (e.g., personal support services, assistive devices) to facilitate the socioeconomic participation of individuals and address disability-related costs.

<sup>4</sup> Nutrition Cluster Advisory Cluster No. 01 Series of 2020. Nutrition Cluster Guidelines on LGU Nutrition Actions Relative to COVID-19; and NNC Governing Board Resolution No.1, Series of 2009: Adopting the National Policy on Nutrition Management in Emergencies and Disasters identified community kitchens as a strategy in addressing hunger and malnutrition.

## MANAGING ECONOMIC RISKS

To sustainably manage economic risks, there is a need to expand membership into social insurance programs of both public and private sectors to increase the number of premium-paying members. Strategies include the following:

**Attract more informal sector workers and other members of the labor force into government social insurance programs.** SSS may consider tailor-fitting its programs according to the needs of informal sector workers and offering lower and more flexible contribution payment schemes. SSS will also continue conducting information awareness campaigns on its various programs in order to broaden its coverage.

**Encourage membership into private insurance and health maintenance organizations.** The Insurance Commission will continue promoting microinsurance and encourage private insurance companies and health maintenance organizations to offer low membership premiums.

**Engage stakeholders and use online platforms to make it easy for social security members to enroll, pay, and transact.** The SSS will continuously improve its systems to ensure simple registration, accessible payment options, and a quick benefit application process. It will also collaborate with the gig economy platforms (e.g., courier and delivery service providers) to facilitate the membership of their partners and provide easier options for payment of premiums (e.g., through salary deduction scheme).

## TO DEAL WITH NATURAL HAZARDS AND HUMAN-INDUCED SHOCKS

**Ensure timely provision of basic needs and services to affected families before, during, and after disasters.** The DSWD, in coordination with the LGUs, will continue to provide essential goods and social services to the affected population even after disasters and emergencies. LGUs must ensure sufficient prepositioned food packs to meet the daily calories and micronutrient needs of the communities, especially those in the evacuation centers. Further, the Department of Health will also make available appropriate and adequate mental health and psychosocial support services in times of disaster.

**Ensure the safety of evacuation centers.** The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) must strictly monitor the LGUs' compliance to the DILG Memorandum Circular No. 122, series of 2018 to ensure durable, safe, and properly designed evacuation facilities with child-, women-, and persons with disability-friendly spaces. The process may be aided by integrating evacuation management as a criterion for awarding the Seal of Good Local Governance.

**Implement end-to-end early warning and risk communication mechanisms during disaster preparedness phase to build trust and willingness among residents to evacuate whenever necessary.** The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and its member agencies will continuously orient stakeholders on evacuation procedures, and provide timely, clear, and accessible early warning and risk communication to encourage families to do pre-emptive evacuation when needed. This also entails the development of clear operational guidelines for the implementation of pre-emptive and mandatory evacuation, including protocols to secure the assets and properties of evacuees.

**Establish a pool of DRRM officers in various government agencies.** Each government agency must have a pool of first responders to act quickly to extreme events. The concerned agencies will also ensure the availability of emergency response resources and trainings required to perform their functions effectively.

## TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION

**Ensure access to credit.** The government will continue to develop and implement innovative and affordable financing facilities. (See [Chapters 9C and 15](#) for detailed strategies)

**Finalize and implement the SP Communication Plan.** To address the limited awareness and understanding of social protection among implementers, partner institutions, and beneficiaries, the Sub-Committee on Social Protection is spearheading the development of the SP Communication Plan, which is expected to be implemented in 2022. It intends to cover and engage relevant national and local government entities, non-state actors including civil society organizations, academe, media, businesses and other private entities, and community stakeholders.

# RESULTS MATRIX

**Table 11.1. Results Matrix**

INDICATOR	BASELINE [YEAR]	TARGETS			ACTUAL		
		2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021
Chapter Outcome: Food security ensured and vulnerabilities of Filipinos reduced							
Subsector Outcome 1: Ensure food resiliency							
Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale							
Severely food insecure	5.12 (2019)	TBD	TBD	0.00	5.12	No data available	No data available
Moderately food insecure	39.06 (2019)	TBD	TBD	25.78	39.06	No data available	No data available
Subsector Outcome 2: Mitigate risks faced by vulnerable groups							
Out-of-pocket health spending as percentage of total health expenditure	45.0 (2016)	-	-	TBD	42.0	39.9	No data available
National Health Insurance Program availment rate increased (%)	80.52 (2017)	-	-	100	No data available	No data available	No data available
Percentage of population covered by social health insurance	91 (2016)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of eligible senior citizens who received social pension	1,412,598 (2016)	3,796,791	4,107,324	4,550,220	3,727,147	3,502,590	3,568,881
Number of child laborers ('000)**	1,066 (2017) <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	664	597 <sup>b</sup>	Pending inputs from PSA
Proportion of Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances (WEDC) reported in DSWD served	100 (355,133) (2016)	N/A	100	100	100 (443,269 served)	100 (510,559 served)	100 (415,482 served)
Proportion of violence against women cases reported in DSWD served	100 (1,749) (2016)	N/A	100	100	100 (1,386 served)	100 (876 served)	Pending inputs from DSWD
Proportion of child abuse cases reported in DSWD served	100 (3,857) (2016)	N/A	100	100	100 (2,855 served)	100 (1,683 served)	100 (1,668 served)
Subsector Outcome 3: Manage economic risks							
Percentage of economically active population contributing to SSS	34.1 (2016)	41	42	44	41.48	38.96	32.56 <sup>5</sup>
Percentage of families covered by social insurance***	68.1 (2016)	TBD	TBD	TBD	88.1	83.8	No data available
Subsector Outcome 4: Deal with natural hazards and human-induced shocks							
Number of deaths attributed to natural disasters per 100,000 population	0.09 (91 deaths) (2016)	0	0	0	0.055 (60 deaths)	0.131 (142 deaths)	0.474 (522 deaths)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sss.gov.ph/sss/DownloadContent?fileName=Proof-of-Accomplishment-Fourth-Quarter.pdf>



INDICATOR	BASELINE (YEAR)	TARGETS			ACTUAL		
		2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021
Number of deaths attributed to human-induced disasters per 100,000 population	0.2 (207 deaths) (2016)	0	0	0	1.075 (1,164 deaths)	0.060 (65 deaths)	0.182 (201 deaths)
Number of missing persons attributed to natural disasters per 100,000 population	0.03 (29 missing persons) (2016)	0	0	0	0.023 (25 missing persons)	0.024 (26 missing persons)	0.074 (82 missing persons)
Number of missing persons attributed to human-induced disasters per 100,000 population	0.017 (18 missing persons) (2016)	0	0	0	0.010 (11 missing persons)	0.017 (19 missing persons)	0.007 (8 missing persons)
Number of directly affected persons attributed to natural disasters per 100,000 population	7,144,557 (7,376,237 affected persons) (2016)	0	0	0	8,899,974 (9,636,381 affected persons)	9,454,984 (10,284,373 affected persons)	13,139,468 (14,479,517 affected persons)
Number of persons directly affected by human-induced disasters per 100,000 population	140.036 (144,577 affected persons) (2016)	0	0	0	76.475 (82,803 affected persons)	53.146 (57,808 affected persons)	244.384 (269,308 affected persons)
Percentage of families affected by natural and human-induced disasters provided with assistance	100 (969,470 families) (2016)	100	100	100	100 (909,300 families)	100 (785,388 families)	100 (658,074 families)
Percentage of households with damaged houses provided with emergency shelter assistance	100 (261,617 households) (2016)	100	100	100	100 (53,071 households)	100 (63,087 households)	100 (228,422 household)
Proportion of emergency loan applications by calamity-affected GSIS members and pensioners granted	100 (67,463 members and 1,296 pensioners) (2016)	100	100	100	100 (274,231 members; 7,747 pensioners)	100 (596,899 members; 39,277 pensioners)	100 (38,980 members; 4,415 pensioners)
<b>Subsector Outcome 5: Achieve universal social protection</b>							
Total government expenditures in Social Protection Programs as a percentage to GDP	1.7 (2016)	TBD	TBD	3.7	1.9	4.0	Data not yet available
Share of total government expenditures in SP to the national budget	9.4 (2016)	TBD	TBD	TBD	10.0	16.8	Data not yet available

\* Note that the responsible agency (e.g., DOH, PhilHealth) did not provide annual targets for these indicators as data are not available for these years (or only end-of-plan target was provided by the concerned agencies).

\*\* Data generated from the Labor Force Survey (LFS) October 2017 Survey Round. It was based on DOLE Department Order (DO) No. 149 Series of 2016 and DO No. 149-A Series of 2017 that enumerate the work that would render a person below 18 years of age to be engaged in child labor. As this data satisfies only a few of the criteria for child labor, it cannot be compared to the results (data) from the 2011 Survey on Children.

<sup>a/</sup> Based on 2010-based population projections (to be updated once the estimate using 2015-based population projections is available)

<sup>b/</sup> Based on 2015-based population projections.

\*\*\* This refers to the total number of families with at least one member covered by any (one or more) social insurance programs (i.e., SSS, GSIS, PhilHealth, private insurance, others) divided by the number of families covered and not covered by any social insurance

## **BOX ARTICLE 11.1. PHILIPPINES' INITIATIVES ON FOOD RESILIENCY**

At the height of the COVID-19 crisis, some Filipinos were unable to afford a balanced and nutritious diet after losing their jobs and income. Results of the Rapid Nutrition Assessment Survey conducted by the Department of Science and Technology – Food and Nutrition Research Institute from November 3 to December 3, 2020 showed that among the 5,717 households surveyed, 62.1 percent experienced moderate to severe food insecurity, while 56.3 percent had difficulties accessing food during the community quarantine period.

To prevent hunger and secure food for every Filipino, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger (IATF-ZH) launched the National Food Policy (NFP) on January 11, 2021. This document includes priority programs and projects (e.g., Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita, Enhanced Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty Program, and feeding programs, among others) and a roadmap aimed to end hunger by 2030, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

Amid mobility restrictions during the pandemic, various innovative strategies have emerged to address the Filipinos' need to access food and basic commodities while minimizing physical contact with other people to reduce community transmission. One example is the “pasabuy” service, where consumers will contact someone to purchase essential items for them and have these delivered to their doorstep. Another is the curbside pick-up service, which allows all customers to easily place an order, pay online, and claim their order at a designated area. LGUs deployed community mobile palengkes, which sell meat, vegetables, and other commodities found in public markets at a similar price. Meanwhile, volunteers set up community pantries or food banks to aid the most vulnerable families and individuals in the community.

The Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita program of the Department of Agriculture also played a vital role in ensuring the availability and accessibility of essential food and products in high consumer demand areas, particularly among low-income families. With the implementation of home-based and blended learning approaches in schools, the ration of nutritious food products under the Department of Education's School-Based Feeding Program was adjusted from actual feeding in schools to food delivery at home. The Department of Social Welfare and Development also provided alternative meal/food commodity options and schemes for the implementation of the Supplementary Feeding Program for children, such as the distribution of nutri-pack, nutri-bun with fresh milk products, and easy to cook/prepare meals through delivery on a weekly or two-week interval basis.