

## **Philippine Intervention**

### **Agenda Item 2. Strategies for building a healthy, protected and productive workforce in Asia and the Pacific**

Chair,

The Republic of the Philippines strongly recognizes the timely discussion and call to immediate action for the formation of healthy, protected and productive workforce in our country and in our region at large. Its relevance is foremostly set within the context of our changing population age structure where the proportion of our working age is steadily increasing and already at 64% in 2020, providing the prospect of demographic dividend and socioeconomic development in the country.

Given this, the new Administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., has set the country's overall development goal **"to reinvigorate job creation and poverty reduction by steering the economy back to its high-growth path and through economic transformation for a prosperous, inclusive and resilient society of Filipinos."** Within this thrust, the Philippine Development Plan for 2023-2028 focuses on an 8-point agenda, where key strategies are intended to address the immediate issues of inflation, socioeconomic scarring and low income.

Over the medium term, the agenda will focus on creating more JOBS with security and social protection and aimed at retaining an adequate and productive workforce for the country. This aims to create more job opportunities for Filipinos as productivity-enhancing investments will be promoted while exercising prudence in fiscal management. For this, the re-tooling and re-skilling of the workforce as well as the institution of effective job facilitation processes to increase the employability of job seekers will be strategically pursued. Finally,

special attention will be given to the development of sustainable technologies to create green jobs and establish livable communities.

Chair,

As with the rest of the world, the Philippines is experiencing the continuing inflationary pressures from both global and domestic sources. To arrest inflation, the country is exerting its efforts to address constraints in food, energy, and transportation and logistics sectors to ensure that there is enough supply of basic goods and services that is affordable and accessible to all. As an example, subsidies for public transportation especially in metropolitan areas are being provided to support the workforce in their economic activities.

We are likewise in the process of intensifying the implementation of our Universal Health Care Law (Republic Act No. 11223) to improve the health and productivity of the current workforce. To continuously improve the quality of the human resource and regain the learning loss during the pandemic, the country has now reopened the face-to-face classes at all levels. Our Department of Education (DepEd) is likewise in the process of improving its educational curriculum to focus on foundational skills to adapt to the digital revolution. It is also working to expand the Alternative Learning System to support dropouts and other segment of population who want to continue learning. Our Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) is now promoting the reskilling and upskilling programs for displaced workers, out-of-school youth, and persons with disability to improve their employability or engagement into gainful economic activities. We are likewise improving our Government Internship Program to provide opportunities for new graduates to gain shop, laboratory, or internship experiences.

For the social protection of workers, the country is continuously strengthening the core functions of poverty reduction and human capital investment of the our Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). In relation to this, we are expediting the adoption of the National ID system (PhilSys) and the facilitation of the digital transformation of social protection systems to allow for a more efficient, targeted, and equitable delivery of social programs. Efforts are also being done to strengthen social protection delivery to be more adaptive and responsive to needs, by streamlining contingency financing mechanisms, establishing a dynamic social registry, and defining business processes for national and local governments with emergency cash transfers.

Chair,

While we are also aware that the Philippines is a major source of health workers around the world, the government is exerting efforts through mutual agreements to improve the status, welfare, protection and benefits of our overseas health care workers while balancing with our domestic needs. We remain committed to support endeavors for international cooperation such as South-South Cooperation with interested countries for ensuring the health, protection and productivity of the workforce in Asia and the Pacific.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.