

REPORT ON LABOR FORCE SURVEY (May 2021)

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Significant improvements in the country's labor market were seen in the latest Labor Force Survey (LFS) results, as the quarantine level in the National Capital Region (NCR) Plus area, composed of NCR, and adjacent provinces such as Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal, was lowered from modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) to general community quarantine (GCQ) on May 15.¹
2. All headline labor market indicators improved when compared to the previous month. The unemployment rate in the country decreased from 8.7 percent in April 2021 to 7.7 percent in May 2021. The underemployment rate also fell from 17.2 percent in April to 12.3 percent in May, the lowest reported underemployment rate since 1987. Labor force (+1.0 million individuals) and employment (+1.4 million individuals) levels increased while unemployment (-0.4 million individuals) and underemployment (-2.0 million individuals) levels declined. These results highlight the tight link between the labor market outcomes and the level of quarantine restrictions.
3. Meanwhile, the labor force participation rate increased from 63.2 percent in April to 64.6 percent in May. Coupled with the decrease in unemployment, this led to the creation of 1.5 million jobs between April and May 2021. Following the trend of recovery from the previous months, total employment remains above pre-COVID-19 levels with a net job creation of 2.2 million

¹ MECQ was implemented in NCR Plus and Abra from May 1 to 14. Meanwhile, it was implemented in the City of Santiago, Quirino, Zamboanga City (starting May 6), and Ifugao for the whole month of May. For May 15 to 31, quarantine status was downgraded to GCQ with heightened restrictions for the NCR Plus area. Retrieved from: MECQ status in select areas effective only until May 14: Palace | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph), Zamboanga City placed under MECQ; Tacloban City is now MGCQ – Presidential Communications Operations Office (pcoo.gov.ph), NCR Plus' quarantine status downgraded to stricter GCQ | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

since January 2020. These significant improvements point to an economy on the mend.

4. To sustain these gains and achieve a 6 to 7 percent economic growth in 2021, the economic managers recommend implementing the recovery package, which includes the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS) adopted through Executive Order No. 140 and accelerating the roll-out of the vaccination program. Both will facilitate the continued safe re-opening of the economy to modified GCQ or better at the appropriate time.

The labor market situation markedly improved compared to the previous month with more than 1.5 million additional employment recorded in the latest LFS, as the community quarantine restrictions in NCR Plus were de-escalated.

Table 1. Summary of labor and employment indicators, January 2020, April 2020, April 2021, and May 2021 (in thousands)

Indicators	2020 ^{a,b}		2021 ^{p,a}	
	Jan	Apr	Apr ^b	May ^c
Population 15 years and over	72,841	73,722	74,971	75,044
Labor Force Level	44,934	41,058	47,407	48,446
Employment Level	42,543	33,830	43,269	44,716
Unemployment Level	2,391	7,228	4,138	3,730
Underemployment Level	6,299	6,398	7,453	5,492
Visible Underemployment	3,799	5,489	5,331	3,968
Employment Generation (QOQ)	6	(8,823)	(2,062) ^d	1,447 ^d
Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	61.7	55.7	63.2	64.6
Employment Rate (%)	94.7	82.4	91.3	92.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.3	17.6	8.7	7.7
Underemployment Rate (%)	14.8	18.9	17.2	12.3
Visible Underemployment Rate (%)	8.9	16.2	12.3	8.9
Mean Hours of Work	41.3	35.0	38.0	39.0

^p Estimates are preliminary and may change; ^a Estimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; ^b Estimates for the quarterly round of the LFS; ^c Starting February 2021, monthly LFS will be conducted in between quarterly/regular LFS to generate national level labor and employment statistics from the survey; ^d Increment from previous month; qoq – quarter on quarter difference

Source: Labor Force Survey (LFS), PSA

1. As NCR Plus shifted from ECQ or MECQ in April to MECQ or GCQ (with heightened restrictions) in May 2021, the employment level rose from 43.3 million to 44.7 million.

Table 2. Employment: January 2020 – May 2021 (in percent)

Indicators	2020 ^{a,b}				2021 ^{p,a}				
	Jan	Apr	Jul ^p	Oct ^p	Jan ^b	Feb ^c	Mar ^c	Apr ^b	May ^c
Employment rate	94.7	82.4	90.0	91.3	91.3	91.2	92.9	91.3	92.3
Employment level (growth rate, QoQ)	0.01	(20.5)	22.1	(3.6)	3.5	4.6 ^d	5.0 ^d	(4.5) ^d	3.3 ^d
<i>Employment levels by sector (in thousands)</i>									
Agriculture	9,625	8,761	10,870	9,762	10,044	10,303	11,130	10,560	10,626
Industry	7,989	5,754	7,785	7,299	7,601	7,647	8,802	7,885	8,223
Manufacturing	3,634	2,699	3,373	3,028	3,140	3,276	3,560	3,420	3,548
Services	24,929	19,315	22,651	22,776	23,602	25,203	25,400	24,825	25,867

^p Estimates are preliminary and may change; ^a Estimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; ^b Estimates for the quarterly round of the LFS; ^c Starting February 2021, monthly LFS will be conducted in between quarterly/regular LFS to generate national level labor and employment statistics from the survey; ^d Increment from previous month; qoq – quarter on quarter difference

Source: Labor Force Survey (LFS), PSA

2. The services sector registered more than a million additional employment month-on-month. The top contributors are wholesale and retail trade (+385,000), public administration and defense (+283,000), other service activities (+207,000), and accommodation and food service activities (+107,000). The expansion in these subsectors reflects the reduction in community quarantine restrictions in May 2021, allowing more businesses to operate.² Indoor and outdoor dine-in services, along with staycations, were

² OMNIBUS Guidelines with Amendments as of May 6, 2021.docx (doh.gov.ph)

permitted in NCR Plus in the latter half of the month.^{3,4} The buoyant outcome of wholesale and retail trade also mirrors the optimistic business sentiments for the subsector in Q2 2021.⁵ Moreover, hiring more contact tracers has likely contributed to the increased employment in public administration and defense.⁶

Meanwhile, employment gains in the sector were moderated by losses from administrative and support service activities (-193,000); professional, scientific, and technical activities (-45,000); and education (-9,000). These employment losses are consistent with the continued increase in job displacements based on administrative data from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). From April to May, 125 firms from these subsectors reported displaced workers either due to permanent closures or retrenchments. Losses in the education subsector are likely due to the summer break for private and non-Department of Education (DepEd) public schools.

On the other hand, wholesale and retail trade (+1.6 million), public administration and defense (+106,000), and other service activities (+105,000) have registered higher employment levels compared to January 2020. Moreover, despite the month-on-month decline, employment in education remained higher than pre-pandemic levels by around 148,000.

3. Employment in the industry sector increased by 338,000, mainly from construction (+262,000), manufacturing (+128,000), and water supply (+34,000). Employment gains in construction are attributed to the lifting of restrictions on small-scale projects in GCQ areas and with Build, Build, Build projects continuing to be fast-tracked.^{7,8} In fact, construction and water supply subsectors continued to surpass pre-pandemic employment levels by 398,000 and 36,000, respectively. Meanwhile, the country's manufacturing

³ Staycation, P2P leisure air travel allowed in GCQ: DOT | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

⁴ NCR Plus placed under GCQ with heightened restrictions starting May 15 – Presidential Communications Operations Office (pcco.gov.ph)

⁵ Business Expectations Survey Q1 2021.pdf (bsp.gov.ph)

⁶ DOLE inks interagency pact to hire more contact tracers | Department of Labor and Employment

⁷ DPWH Issues Revised Construction Safety Guidelines; Prohibits Small-Scale Projects to Operate in ECQ, MECQ areas | Department of Public Works and Highways

⁸ 'Build, Build, Build' projects in SoCot on track: Nograles | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) improved from 49.0 in April to 49.9 in May. Although this remains slightly lower than the neutral value of 50.0, it signals that manufacturing is on track towards stabilization.⁹

On the other hand, the mining and quarrying subsector recorded a decline in employment of around 70,000 as open-pit mining continues to be banned.¹⁰ Moreover, as concerns in the subsector arise, electricity, gas, steam, and air-conditioning supplies registered around 15,000 employment losses, slightly tempering the growth of the industry sector.^{11,12}

4. The agriculture sector likewise recorded month-on-month employment gains (+66,000). Although employment in the agriculture and forestry subsector substantially increased (+284,000), this was largely offset by losses in fishing and aquaculture (-218,000). However, the agriculture sector continues to thrive as livelihoods become more resilient and farmers are upskilled to produce higher-value produce.^{13,14,15} The Department of Agriculture (DA) also reported a decline in cases of African swine fever (ASF) in some areas of the country.¹⁶ On the other hand, the shellfish ban due to red tide in Visayas may have contributed to the decline in employment in fishing and aquaculture.¹⁷

Compared to pre-pandemic levels, the agriculture sector demonstrated robust growth over the past year, surpassing January 2020 employment levels by more than 1.0 million.

5. In terms of major occupations, the additional employment recorded month-on-month were observed in low to medium-level skills, particularly among

⁹ IHS Markit Philippines (markiteconomics.com)

¹⁰ DENR studies possible lifting of ban on open-pit mining | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

¹¹ Power in Albay island-town cut off due to unpaid bills | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

¹² Rotational brownouts to persist in Luzon | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

¹³ Antique island municipality thrives through seaweed farming | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

¹⁴ Gov't reskills Kalinga rice farmers to boost yield | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

¹⁵ TESDA, Nestle partner to train farmers become agripreneurs | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

¹⁶ DA reports downtrend in ASF cases in Bicol | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

¹⁷ Shellfish ban violators in E. Visayas warned | Philippine News Agency (pna.gov.ph)

elementary occupations¹⁸ (+1.0 million), plant and machine operators and assemblers¹⁹ (+271,000), service and sales workers²⁰ (+241,000), and craft and related trade workers²¹ (+119,000). These mostly correspond to employment generated in the aforementioned industries. Occupations classified as professionals also increased by 126,000.

On the other hand, the following occupation groups registered a decline in employment: skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers (-183,000), clerical support workers (-69,000), technicians and associate professionals (-50,000), and managers (-45,000). These employment losses were consistent with the decline in the subsectors of fishing and aquaculture; administrative and support service activities; and professional, scientific, and technical activities.

6. By nature of employment, the bulk of additional employment were permanent (+1.0 million), largely concentrated in the services (+938,000) and industry (+165,000) sectors. By subsector, most permanent jobs created were from wholesale and retail trade (+312,000), public administration and defense (+297,000), other service activities (+221,000), and manufacturing (+149,000). Agriculture and forestry (+124,000) likewise experienced an uptick in permanent employment. However, this was more than offset by losses in fishing and aquaculture (-193,000).

Short-term jobs were also created month-on-month in the agriculture and services sectors, which mainly came from agriculture and forestry (+227,000), wholesale and retail trade (+73,000), and transportation and storage

¹⁸ Elementary occupations involve the performance of simple and routine tasks which may require the use of hand-held tools and considerable physical effort.

¹⁹ Plant and machine operators and assemblers operate and monitor industrial and agricultural machinery equipment on the spot or by remote control, drive and operate trains, motor vehicles and mobile machinery and equipment, or assemble products from component parts according to strict specifications and procedures.

²⁰ Service and sales workers provide personal and protective services related to travel, housekeeping, catering, personal care, or protection against fire and unlawful acts, or demonstrate and sell goods in wholesale or retail shops and similar establishments, as well as at stalls and on markets.

²¹ Craft and related trades workers apply specific knowledge and skills in the fields to construct and maintain buildings, form metal, erect metal structures, set machine tools, or make, fit, maintain and repair machinery, equipment or tools, carry out printing work produce or process foodstuffs, textiles, or wooden, metal and other articles, including handicraft goods.

(+48,000). These were tempered by losses in education (-46,000), manufacturing (-30,000), and fishing and aquaculture (-29,000).

7. Broad-based employment growth was observed across all classes of workers except for employers in own family-operated farm or business (-373,000). The major contributor for the decline in employment of the said classification can be seen in agriculture which posted a decline of -284,000. This can be partly attributed to the weather systems (*i.e.*, localized thunderstorms, low pressure areas (LPAs), easterlies, ridge of high-pressure areas (HPAs), inter-tropical convergence zone (ITCZ) and two tropical cyclones namely: Tropical Storm (TS) “Crising” and TS “Dante”) that affected the country during the month and hampered farming activities.²² Remunerative and stable work (or wage and salary workers²³) recorded the highest increase (+1.2 million) among all classes followed by self-employed individuals (+439,000) and unpaid family workers (+157,000). Likewise, improvements in terms of the classes of workers can be attributed to the more relaxed implementation of community quarantines.

However, when compared to pre-pandemic levels, some classes of workers such as private establishment workers (-711,000) and employers in own family-operated farm or business (-241,000) are yet to recover.

Meanwhile, vulnerable employment remains a challenge in the labor market. It posted an increase from 15.7 million in April 2021 to 16.3 million in May 2021 or an additional 596,000 individuals (+3.8%). The bulk of vulnerable employment came from the wholesale and retail trade (+404,000) and agriculture and forestry (+146,000) sub-sectors.

²² <http://bagong.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/agri-weather/impact-assessment-for-agriculture>

²³ This includes those who worked in private households, private establishments, government or government corporation, and with pay in own family-operated farm or business.

The national underemployment rate significantly improved to 12.3 percent, almost 5 percentage points (ppts) lower from a month ago and the lowest underemployment rate recorded since 1987.

8. As the government begins to facilitate the safe and gradual re-opening of the economy, full-time employment²⁴ increased substantially by 13.4 percent or an additional 3.2 million individuals. In addition, part-time workers²⁵ declined by 7.4 percent or 1.3 million individuals less compared to the previous month. There was also a notable decline (-469,000) of workers with a job but not at work.

Due to the steep increase in full-time employment, the mean hours of work improved from 38.0 in April 2021 to 39.0 in May 2021. Overall, these further demonstrate sufficient income and improvements in the quality of employment being generated.

9. At the same time, the number of underemployed workers fell by almost 2 million from the previous month. This brings down the underemployment rate to 12.3 percent in May 2021 from 17.2 percent in the April round.

Table 3. Underemployment rates, January 2020 – May 2021 (in percent)

Area	2020 ^{a,b}				2021 ^{p,a}				
	Jan	Apr	Jul ^p	Oct ^p	Jan ^b	Feb ^c	Mar ^c	Apr ^b	May ^c
National	14.8	18.9	17.3	14.4	16.0	18.2	16.2	17.2	12.3

^p Estimates are preliminary and may change; ^aEstimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; ^b/ Estimates for quarterly round of the LFS; ^c/ Starting February 2021, monthly LFS will be conducted in between quarterly/regular LFS to generate national level labor and employment statistics from the survey

²⁴ worked 40 hours or more

²⁵ worked less than 40 hours

Source: Labor Force Survey (LFS), PSA

10. Underemployment declined in all sectors, with the services sector shedding the most underemployed workers (-1.2 million) mainly in wholesale and retail trade (-432,000), transportation and storage (-328,000), and other service activities (-165,000). Only the public administration and defense subsector recorded an increase in underemployment (+7,000). The lowering of quarantine restrictions in NCR plus mid-May allowed for higher operational capacities in establishments such as restaurants, gyms, and salons.²⁶ Moreover, the implementation of the Safety Seal Program²⁷ allowed compliant businesses to further increase their capacity by 10 percent.²⁸ Underemployment in the industry sector also dropped by 445,000 workers, mostly from manufacturing (-238,000) and construction (-179,000), as activities bounced back and became optimistic and gained confidence due to the COVID-19 vaccine rollout²⁹ and economic reforms underway.³⁰ Similarly, underemployment in agriculture dropped by 321,000, with multiple regions seeing a downtrend in ASF cases³¹ supported by the distribution of assistance to hog raisers.³²

11. In terms of hours worked, both visible³³ (-1.4 million) and invisible³⁴ underemployment (-599,000) declined month-on-month, as the number of part-time workers and those working 49 hours or more decreased. In particular, the number of workers citing ECQ or lockdowns as the reason for working less than 40 hours or 49 hours or more declined as well. This demonstrates that improvements are broadly seen in all major sectors.

²⁶ NCR Plus' quarantine status downgraded to stricter GCQ | Philippine News Agency

²⁷ DOLE-DOH-DILG-DOT-DTI Joint Memorandum Circular No. 21-01, Series of 2021

²⁸ Press Briefing of the Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque June 14, 2021 | Presidential Communications Operations Office

²⁹ Construction firm eyes more 'Build, Build, Build' projects | Philippine News Agency

³⁰ PH remains key market for manufacturing investment | Philippine News Agency

³¹ African swine fever cases recorded in Eastern Samar, DA reports downtrend in ASF cases in Bicol | Philippine News Agency

³² CDO hands over P6.9-M assistance to ASF-hit hog raisers, DA OKs P5.62-B loans for hog repopulation | Philippine News Agency

³³ Visible underemployment are persons who are working less than 40 hours per week and want more hours of work

³⁴ Invisible underemployment are persons working at least 40 hours and still want additional hours of work

12. Underemployment decreased across all classes of workers relative to the previous month. The bulk of the decline came from wage and salary workers (-1.2 million). This was followed by the self-employed (-598,000), unpaid family workers (-129,000), and employers in own family-operated farm or business (-63,000).

The unemployment rate in May 2021 eased to 7.7 percent from 8.7 percent in April 2021 as the number of unemployed youth and prime working age workers decreased.

13. Relative to the previous month, the total unemployment level in May 2021 improved to 3.7 million, which is equivalent to about 408,000 less unemployed individuals, most of whom are women (-243,000). This reduces the difference between the January 2020 pre-pandemic figures and the latest unemployment level to about 1.3 million. Among the additional unemployed, more than half (53.5%) did not look for work for valid reasons, mainly COVID-19-related (32.3%) and pending job application results (15.7%).

Table 4. Unemployment Rates: January 2020 – May 2021 (in percent)

Indicator	2020 ^{a,b}				2021 ^{p,a}				
	Jan	Apr	Jul ^p	Oct ^p	Jan ^b	Feb ^c	Mar ^c	Apr ^b	May ^c
Overall	5.3	17.6	10.0	8.7	8.7	8.8	7.1	8.7	7.7
15-24	13.6	31.5	22.4	19.4	19.8	18.5	15.4	15.8	14.5
25-54	4.0	16.0	8.1	7.3	7.4	7.5	6.0	8.1	6.9
55 & over	2.0	10.5	4.3	4.3	3.7	4.8	2.9	4.2	4.2

^p Estimates are preliminary and may change; ^aEstimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; ^b Estimates for quarterly round of the LFS; ^c Starting February 2021, monthly LFS will be conducted in between quarterly/regular LFS to generate national level labor and employment statistics from the survey

Source: Labor Force Survey (LFS), PSA

14. By age group, unemployment decreased across all age groups except for the older age group (55 years old and above). The prime-age workers (25 to 54 years old) registered the largest decline in unemployment rate relative to April 2021 (-1.2 percentage points or -335,000 unemployed). Meanwhile, youth unemployment rate further declined by -1.3 ppts to 14.5 percent or 92,000 less unemployed youth.

15. In terms of educational attainment, losses of the previous month were offset in May 2021, where figures registered decreased unemployment rates across the board, except among post-secondary undergraduates (+7.5 ppts) who may have faced difficulties in a tight labor market, especially compared to those with a college education³⁵.

³⁵ Based on ADB's publication (March 2021) on Technical and Vocational Education and training in the Philippines in the Age of industry 4.0, most industries identified a lack of sector- and firm-specific skills, particularly nontechnical core skills, among trainees especially in the information technology-business process management (IT-BPM), construction, health and wellness, and transportation and logistics industries. Technical skills also seem to be lacking among graduates in the agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and transportation and logistics industries.

Table 5. Comparison of the latest unemployment rates³⁶ across selected Asian economies

Indicator	Unemployment Rate	Month released
China ^a	3.9	Mar 2021
India ^b	9.9	Apr-May 2021
Indonesia ^c	6.3	Feb 2021
Malaysia ^b	4.6	Apr 2021
Philippines	7.7	May 2021
Thailand ^b	1.9	Oct-Dec 2020
Vietnam ^a	2.4	Mar 2021

Notes: a/ Unemployment in these countries is reported quarterly (March, June, September, December); b/ Unemployment in these countries is reported monthly; Figures above refer to quarterly average; c/ Indonesia unemployment is reported semi-annually (February and August); Figures in February do not take into account COVID-19 impact

16. Compared to the latest unemployment rates of selected Asian economies, the country's unemployment rate remains relatively high, except for India which experienced a massive surge of COVID-19 cases.

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) swiftly improved to 64.6 percent in May 2021. Coupled with the decrease in unemployment, this led to the creation of 1.5 million jobs between April and May 2021. Following the trend of recovery from the previous months, total employment remains above pre-COVID-19 levels with a net job creation of 2.2 million since January 2020.

³⁶ <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/china/unemployment-rate>;
<https://unemploymentinindia.cmie.com/>;
<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/11/05/unemployment-surges-to-decade-high-as-covid-19-causes-millions-to-lose-jobs.html>;
<https://www.economy.com/malaysia/unemployment-rate>;
<https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/thailand/unemployment-rate>;
<https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/vietnam/unemployment-rate>

17. The total labor force is up by 2.2 percent or an additional 1.0 million individuals relative to the previous month. The uptick was observed across all age groups, both among the prime working age and older age groups: 25- to 55-year-olds (+540,000) and 55-year-olds (+446,000). Furthermore, the improvement was slightly more pronounced among females (+562,000) than males (+477,000). Nevertheless, the country has exceeded its pre-pandemic LFPR at 61.7 percent since February 2021.

Table 6. LFPR, January 2020 – May 2021 (in percent)

Indicator	2020 ^{a,b}				2021 ^{p,a}				
	Jan	Apr	Jul ^p	Oct ^p	Jan ^b	Feb ^c	Mar ^c	Apr ^b	May ^c
LFPR (total)	61.7	55.7	61.9	58.7	60.5	63.5	65.0	63.2	64.6
Youth	37.4	32.4	38.9	33.9	34.7	37.7	40.1	38.2	38.4
Male	74.8	69.8	75.3	72.3	73.9	75.9	76.8	75.0	76.1
Female	48.4	41.5	48.5	45.0	46.9	50.9	53.1	51.4	52.9

^p Estimates are preliminary and may change; ^aEstimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; ^b Estimates for quarterly round of the LFS; ^c Starting February 2021, monthly LFS will be conducted in between quarterly/regular LFS to generate national level labor and employment statistics from the survey

Source: Labor Force Survey (LFS), PSA

18. An overall decline (-966,000) was observed among persons not in the labor force (NILF). More than half of the decrease is attributed to individuals citing COVID-19 or community quarantines (-529,000), household family duties (-175,000), temporary illness or disability (-147,000), and old age or permanent disability (-132,000) as reasons for opting out of the labor force. Meanwhile, schooling remains the top reason for the majority (40%) of those not in the labor force in May 2021, most of whom are also young people (97.8%).

Collectively rallying to implement the three-pillar strategy in the immediate term will underpin and accelerate recovery to achieve better health and economic outcomes for all.

19. *The first pillar is the safe and gradual re-opening of the economy to modified GCQ or better at the appropriate time.* The monthly LFS results show us that labor market outcomes are tightly linked to prevailing quarantine levels. This may be complemented by expanding the age group allowed to go out and gradually resuming face-to-face learning in low-risk areas with all the appropriate safeguards in place.

Shift towards targeted quarantine restrictions. When COVID-19 cases are detected, the implementation of localized or granular community quarantine, instead of province- or city-wide restrictions, balances the need to improve health system capacity to save lives from COVID-19, while allowing other sectors where transmission is low to continue to operate. Hence, it is necessary to intensify the implementation of the PDITR strategy through initiatives such as the Safety Seal Program, digital contact tracing, efficient triaging of cases across treatment facilities, and the conduct of more public health researches. All these will sustain the recent gains in employment and accelerate the recovery from the pandemic.

20. *The second pillar is to fully implement the recovery package.* To sustain our gains and achieve a 6 to 7 percent economic growth in 2021, we need to implement our recovery package which consists of fiscal, monetary, and financial interventions. A number of programs have been embedded in the 2021 budget to help Filipinos cope with the impact of the pandemic. The implementation of these programs, along with the utilization of the remaining amount under the extended FY 2020 budget, may need to be accelerated. Aside from this, the National Employment Recovery Strategy (NERS) adopted through Executive Order No. 140 will also complement ongoing efforts to generate and preserve jobs while supporting existing and emerging businesses.

Swiftly implement recently enacted legislation to aid the country's economic recovery, including the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act. The law will help attract more foreign direct investments (FDI) and maintain fiscal prudence and stability by introducing reforms to the corporate tax and incentives system. This will ensure that the grant of tax incentives is performance-based, targeted, timebound, and transparent. The law also reduces the corporate income tax rate by 5 to 10 percent for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other corporations. All these are expected to result in more FDI, better job opportunities, and countryside development. There is also a need to urgently pass the economic liberalization bills, such as the amendments to the Public Service Act, Foreign Investment Act, and Retail Trade Liberalization Act, that will further ease restrictions on foreign investments and complement the benefits of CREATE.

21. ***The third pillar is the accelerated implementation of the vaccine deployment program.*** Accelerating the rollout of vaccination in the succeeding months is necessary to achieve herd immunity and allow for the gradual re-opening of the economy. The effective roll-out of these vaccine doses, complemented by the safe and gradual re-opening of low-risk areas, will build confidence to go out and earn a living while keeping their families safe. This will allow the economy to further restore jobs and income while reducing virus transmission.

As of June 27, more than 10 million doses have been administered. This consists of 7.5 million and 2.5 million for the first and second doses, with the number of jobs averaging at 240,000 per day reaching as high as 355,000 per day.³⁷ Vaccination has ramped up as the inoculation of those under the A4 priority group commenced.³⁸ The A4 priority group for the COVID-19 vaccination rollout has been expanded to include all those who work outside their homes and government employees, with emphasis on high-risk areas such as the NCR Plus.³⁹ Moreover, the government's vaccination program is

³⁷ Vaccine Statistic as of June 27, 2021 | DOH Official Facebook Page

³⁸ Gov't to start vaccinating 'A4' priority group in June | Philippine News Agency

³⁹ IATF Resolution no. 117

expected to further accelerate recovery with an additional 27 million doses scheduled to arrive from now until August 2021.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the government is expected to intensify its information campaign to reduce vaccine hesitancy among the public. Transportation and logistical preparations and pre-registration of vaccine recipients will also be prioritized and efficiently carried out by local health units.

⁴⁰ 11M doses of Covid-19 vaccine to arrive this month | Philippine News Agency