

# REPORT ON LABOR FORCE SURVEY (OCTOBER 2021)

## HIGHLIGHTS

1. The October 2021 labor force survey results affirmed the soundness of the government's push to safely reopen the economy, restore employment, and manage the spread of COVID-19. As restrictions were relaxed to alert level 2, more people were able to work while COVID-19 positivity, case fatality, and bed occupancy rates continued to improve. The country's unemployment rate decreased from 8.9 percent in September 2021 to 7.4 percent in October 2021.
2. The underemployment rate, however, increased from 14.2 percent to 16.1 percent in the same period as more people worked under part-time arrangements. The labor force participation rate also slightly decreased from 63.3 percent to 62.6 percent.
3. Nevertheless, more people are employed today than in the months before the pandemic struck. Employment creation remained positive as 234,000 more Filipinos were able to find work in the past month. This brings total employment to 1.3 million above pre-pandemic levels.
4. Better employment outcomes in October were driven by the government's policies that further reopened the economy safely, such as shifting to the alert level system and granular lockdowns from large-area and blanket quarantines and allowing more mobility for vaccinated individuals.
5. To further accelerate our recovery, the economic development cluster has approved a 10-point agenda to shift the country from a pandemic to endemic paradigm covering the following areas: 1) metrics; 2) vaccination; 3) healthcare capacity; 4) economy and mobility; 5) schooling; 6) domestic travel; 7) international travel; 8) digital transformation; 9) pandemic flexibility bill; and 10) medium-term preparation for pandemic resilience.

**Table 1. Summary of labor and employment indicators,  
 January 2020, October 2020, September 2021, and October 2021  
 (in thousands)**

Indicators	2020 <sup>a,b</sup>		2021 <sup>p,a</sup>	
	Jan	Oct	Sep <sup>c</sup>	Oct <sup>c</sup>
Population 15 years and over	72,841	74,307	75,570	75,570
Labor Force Level	44,934	43,649	47,847	47,330
Employment Level	42,543	39,837	43,592	43,826
Unemployment Level	2,391	3,813	4,255	3,504
Underemployment Level	6,299	5,747	6,183	7,044
Visible Underemployment	3,799	3,605	4,415	4,708
Employment Generation (QoQ / MoM)	6	(1,465)	(642) <sup>d</sup>	234 <sup>d</sup>
Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	61.7	58.7	63.3	62.6
Employment Rate (%)	94.7	91.3	91.1	92.6
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.3	8.7	8.9	7.4
Underemployment Rate (%)	14.8	14.4	14.2	16.1
Visible Underemployment Rate (%)	8.9	9.0	10.1	10.7
Mean Hours of Work	41.3	40.8	40.2	39.7

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

Source: Labor Force Survey (LFS), Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

**Compared to the previous month, the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) slightly dropped to 62.6 percent, with most citing age limitations and household duties as reasons.**

6. The number of persons not in the labor force (NILF) increased by 516,000, mainly due to more individuals citing age limitations, *i.e.*, being too young/old or retired/having permanent disability (+286,000), and household duties (+135,000) for opting out of the labor force. Relative to the pre-pandemic situation, notable decreases are observed among those individuals who did not join the labor force due to household duties (-2.4 million). In contrast, those citing schooling (+991,000) and age-related (+875,000) reasons for staying out of the labor force increased substantially.
  
7. With the increase in individuals who stayed out of the labor force, the total labor force slightly contracted by 1.1 percent. The reduction can be observed across all age groups except 35-44 years old (+164,000), with the prime working age group or 25-34 years old recording the most number of declines (-412,000). Aside from this, the decline is slightly more pronounced among females (-393,000) than males (-123,000).

**Table 2. LFPR, January 2020 – October 2021 (in percent)**

Indicator	2020 <sup>a,b</sup>				2021 <sup>p,a</sup>									
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct <sup>p</sup>	Jan <sup>b</sup>	Feb <sup>c</sup>	Mar <sup>c</sup>	Apr <sup>b</sup>	May <sup>c</sup>	Jun <sup>c</sup>	Jul <sup>b</sup>	Aug <sup>c</sup>	Sep <sup>c</sup>	Oct <sup>c</sup>
LFPR (total)	61.7	55.7	61.9	58.7	60.5	63.5	65.0	63.2	64.6	65.0	59.8	63.6	63.3	62.6
Youth	37.4	32.4	38.9	33.9	34.7	37.7	40.1	38.2	38.4	39.8	33.3	37.8	35.8	35.7
Male	74.8	69.8	75.3	72.3	73.9	76.0	76.8	75.0	76.1	76.3	72.4	75.8	75.5	74.9
Female	48.4	41.5	48.5	45.0	46.9	50.9	53.1	51.4	52.9	53.7	47.1	51.4	51.1	50.2

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

Source: LFS, PSA

## Employment posted a positive growth of 0.5 percent in October compared to the previous month, mainly from the agriculture and services sectors.

8. In October 2021, the total number of employed Filipinos reached 43.8 million, or 234,000 higher than the previous month. The agriculture sector was the largest source of additional employment at 522,000, mainly from wage workers and employers.
9. Similarly, the services sector registered additional 63,000 employment month-on-month (m-o-m). In particular, notable gains were recorded in health (+127,000), education (+123,000), accommodation and food services (+109,000), information and communication (+81,000), and real estate activities (+69,000) predominantly among wage workers. Employment growth in health, education, and accommodation and food services was consistent with the decline in the number of firms reporting displacements either due to permanent closures or retrenchments for the month of October.<sup>1</sup> Overall, the expansion of the alert level system along with easing of said alert levels have partly contributed to the employment creation in the sector.<sup>2,3</sup> More specifically, restrictions and travel requirements have been considerably reduced and preparations for face-to-face classes commenced during the period.<sup>4,5,6,7,8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Jobs Displacement Report

<sup>2</sup> Gov't eyes nationwide rollout of alert level system | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](http://pna.gov.ph))

<sup>3</sup> Better Christmas ahead as restrictions ease: DTI chief | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](http://pna.gov.ph))

<sup>4</sup> 14 destinations scrap swab test for fully vaxxed persons | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](http://pna.gov.ph))

<sup>5</sup> Staycation in NCR allowed starting Oct. 16 | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](http://pna.gov.ph))

<sup>6</sup> Hundred Islands eyes high tourist arrivals with shift to MGCQ | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](http://pna.gov.ph))

<sup>7</sup> Easing of travel restrictions benefitting PH property mart | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](http://pna.gov.ph))

<sup>8</sup> On the initial selection of schools for the pilot implementation of face-to-face classes | Department of Education ([deped.gov.ph](http://deped.gov.ph))

**Table 3. Employment: January 2020 – October 2021**

Indicators	2020 <sup>a,b</sup>				2021 <sup>p,a</sup>									
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct <sup>p</sup>	Jan <sup>b</sup>	Feb <sup>c</sup>	Mar <sup>c</sup>	Apr <sup>b</sup>	May <sup>c</sup>	Jun <sup>c</sup>	Jul <sup>b</sup>	Aug <sup>c</sup>	Sep <sup>c</sup>	Oct <sup>c</sup>
Employment rate (in %)	94.7	82.4	90.0	91.3	91.3	91.2	92.9	91.3	92.3	92.3	93.1	91.9	91.1	92.6
Employment growth (QoQ in %)	0.01	(20.5)	22.1	(3.5)	3.5	4.6 <sup>d</sup>	5.0 <sup>d</sup>	(4.5) <sup>d</sup>	3.3 <sup>d</sup>	0.8 <sup>d</sup>	(7.6) <sup>d</sup>	6.2 <sup>d</sup>	(1.5) <sup>d</sup>	0.5 <sup>d</sup>
<i>Employment levels by sector (in thousands)</i>														
Agriculture	9,625	8,761	10,867	9,762	10,044	10,303	11,130	10,560	10,626	10,938	9,188	11,096	10,247	10,769
Industry	7,989	5,754	7,783	7,300	7,601	7,647	8,802	7,885	8,223	8,171	8,341	8,374	8,167	7,817
Manufacturing	3,634	2,699	3,373	3,029	3,140	3,276	3,560	3,420	3,548	3,502	3,539	3,708	3,365	3,326
Services	24,929	19,315	22,652	22,775	23,602	25,203	25,400	24,825	25,867	25,966	24,138	24,764	25,178	25,240

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

Source: LFS, PSA

Meanwhile, employment losses were recorded in transportation and storage (-156,000), wholesale and retail trade (-151,000), and other service activities (-118,000). Most of the decline in transportation and storage came from the self-employed, which was likely worsened by the continued increase in oil prices,<sup>9</sup> while those in wholesale and retail trade and other services are among wage and salaried workers.

In contrast, the industry sector posted a 351,000 employment loss m-o-m, mainly from construction (-310,000), electricity (-44,000), and manufacturing (-39,000). Between September to October, more firms from the construction and electricity subsectors reportedly displaced workers either due to permanent closures or retrenchments.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, employment in manufacturing continued to be subdued, with staffing levels falling for the 20th consecutive month due to voluntary resignations and cost-saving efforts of firms.<sup>11</sup> As a result,

<sup>9</sup> Oil prices up for 2<sup>nd</sup> straight month | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](http://pna.gov.ph))

<sup>10</sup> DOLE Jobs Displacement Report

<sup>11</sup> IHS Markit Philippines Manufacturing PMI ([markiteconomics.com](http://markiteconomics.com))

manufacturing employment is still 308,000 less than the pre-pandemic period (January 2020).

10. Overall, employers (+396,000), unpaid workers (+161,000), and wage workers (+29,000) posted positive net employment in October. On the other hand, the number of self-employed dropped by 351,000, contributing to a significant decline of 190,000 in vulnerable employment.
11. By major occupation groups, employment creation for the period was primarily observed among skilled workers, particularly managers (+646,000), technicians (+306,000), professionals (+163,000), and skilled agricultural workers (+103,000). However, these were moderated by losses among plant and machine operators (-397,000), elementary occupations<sup>12</sup> (-321,000), and craft and trade workers<sup>13</sup> (-226,000).
12. By geographical location, the following regions posted the highest employment gains in October 2021 compared to July 2021: Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) (+396,000), Region VII (+394,000), Region X (+293,000), National Capital Region (NCR) (+206,000), and Region IV-A (+182,000). These regions may have benefitted from the shift to the alert level system and easing of restrictions in October.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Region VIII (-48,000), Region IV-B (-45,000), and Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) (-23,000) registered q-o-q employment losses.
13. Notably, employment recorded in October 2021 is 1.3 million higher compared to pre-pandemic period (January 2020), mainly from agriculture, trade, admin and support, health, and construction.

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<sup>12</sup> Elementary occupations involve the performance of simple and routine tasks which may require the use of hand-held tools and considerable physical effort.

<sup>13</sup> 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 equipment or tools, carry out printing work produce or process foodstuffs, textiles, or wooden, metal and other articles, including handicraft goods.

<sup>14</sup> Gov't eyes nationwide rollout of alert level system | Philippine News Agency ([pna.gov.ph](https://pna.gov.ph))

**The national underemployment rate in October increased to 16.1 percent or 1.9 percentage points (ppts) higher compared to the previous month in September.**

14. Part-time employment<sup>15</sup> increased (+830,000) m-o-m, majority of which came from agriculture (+560,000), trade (+129,000), manufacturing (+92,000) and construction (+85,000). Most of the increase was among workers who cited the nature of their work, school, personal reasons, and poor business conditions (+135,000), as reasons for working less than 40 hours per week.

In contrast, full-time employment<sup>16</sup> generally declined (-384,000), mostly in construction (-381,000), transportation (-208,000), trade (-201,000), and manufacturing (-134,000). These were however offset by gains in education (+155,000), health (+149,000), public administration (+91,000), and accommodation and food services (+75,000) as travel restrictions were gradually relaxed for vaccinated individuals.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, the mean hours of work declined slightly to 39.7 hours from 40.2 hours the previous month.

15. Likewise, the number of underemployed<sup>18</sup> workers rose by 862,000 relative to September, mostly coming from the services sector, particularly trade (+303,000) and transport (+115,000). Underemployment in the industry sector also increased by 253,000, mainly in manufacturing (+161,000) and construction (+51,000). Moreover, underemployment in the agriculture sector also grew, albeit marginally (+5,000), as underemployment in the agriculture and forestry (+52,000) was tempered by the decline in fishing and aquaculture (-47,000). All these pulled up the underemployment rate to 16.1 percent, or equivalent to 7.0 million underemployed workers.

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<sup>15</sup> worked less than 40 hours

<sup>16</sup> worked 40 hours or more

<sup>17</sup> 14 destinations scrap swab test for fully vaxxed persons | Retrieved from: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1158033>

<sup>18</sup> Employed individuals who want more work

16. In terms of geographic location, underemployment rates declined in most regions compared to July 2021. The underemployment rate improved the most in Northern Mindanao (-12.6 ppts), Davao (-10.2 ppts) and Eastern Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula (-9.8 ppts). On the other hand, Caraga and Region IV-A recorded increases in underemployment relative to the previous quarter at +4.6 ppts and +0.5 ppt, respectively. Moreover, community quarantine measures were relaxed in October as regions outside NCR started to implement granular lockdowns and adopted the alert level system. However, the year-to-date (YTD) average underemployment rate in Areas Outside NCR (AONCR) at 18.3 percent was still slightly above the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) target range of 16.0-18.0 percent.

**Table 4. Underemployment rates, January 2020 – October 2021 (in percent)**

Area	2020 <sup>a,b</sup>							2021 <sup>p,a</sup>						
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct <sup>p</sup>	Jan <sup>b</sup>	Feb <sup>c</sup>	Mar <sup>c</sup>	Apr <sup>b</sup>	May <sup>c</sup>	Jun <sup>c</sup>	Jul <sup>b</sup>	Aug <sup>c</sup>	Sep <sup>c</sup>	Oct <sup>b</sup>
<b>National</b>	14.8	18.9	17.3	14.4	16.0	18.2	16.2	17.2	12.3	14.2	20.9	14.7	14.2	16.1
<b>AONCR</b>	16.7	20.3	18.1	14.2	17.1	N/A	N/A	17.5	N/A	N/A	21.8	N/A	N/A	16.9

<sup>p</sup> Estimates are preliminary and may change; <sup>a</sup> Estimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; <sup>b</sup> Estimates for quarterly round of the LFS; <sup>c</sup> 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: LFS, PSA

**The unemployment rate in October 2021 improved to 7.4 percent, as the number of unemployed individuals declined across all age groups.**

17. With increased employment and a decline in the labor force, the unemployment level was reduced by 17.7 percent or about 751,000 in October compared to September. Unemployment across all age groups declined: 25 to 34 years old (-329,000), 15 to 24 years old (-186,000), 45 to 54 years old (-98,000), 55 and over (-89,000) and 35 to 44 years old (-49,000). Overall, unemployment level was higher by 1.1 million relative to the pre-pandemic figure in January 2020.



18. The YTD average unemployment rate (8.0%) also remains at the midpoint of the PDP target of 7.0 to 9.0 percent. Meanwhile, the youth unemployment rate for October 2021 (15.1%) is well within the PDP target range of 14.5 to 16.5 percent.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 5. Unemployment Rates: January 2020 – October 2021 (in percent)**

Indicator	2020 <sup>a,b</sup>							2021 <sup>a,a</sup>						
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct <sup>p</sup>	Jan <sup>b</sup>	Feb <sup>c</sup>	Mar <sup>c</sup>	Apr <sup>b</sup>	May <sup>c</sup>	Jun <sup>c</sup>	Jul <sup>b</sup>	Aug <sup>c</sup>	Sep <sup>c</sup>	Oct <sup>c</sup>
Overall	5.3	17.6	10.0	8.7	8.7	8.8	7.1	8.7	7.7	7.7	6.9	8.1	8.9	7.4
15-24	13.6	31.5	22.4	19.4	19.8	18.5	15.4	15.8	14.5	14.5	15.4	16.0	17.7	15.1
25-54	4.0	16.0	8.1	7.3	7.4	7.5	6.0	8.1	6.9	7.1	5.9	7.2	7.9	6.5
55 & over	2.0	10.5	4.3	4.3	3.7	4.9	2.9	4.2	4.2	3.3	3.3	3.8	4.9	3.8

<sup>p</sup> Estimates are preliminary and may change; <sup>a</sup> Estimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; <sup>b</sup> Estimates for quarterly round of the LFS; <sup>c</sup> 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: LFS, PSA

19. On the other hand, the number of discouraged workers slightly increased (+54,000), bringing the YTD percentage of discouraged workers to 4.7 percent. This is still higher than the comparable figure in 2020 (3.9%) but better than the PDP target of 11.5 percent for 2021.
20. On the regional unemployment rates, slight increases have been observed relative to July 2021. However, these were offset by the reduction in unemployment rates for Central Visayas (-1.8 ppts), Caraga (-1.8 ppts), BARMM (-1.5 ppts), Western Visayas (-1.0 ppt), Northern Mindanao (-0.8 ppt) and Cagayan Valley (-0.7 ppt).
21. The Philippines' unemployment rate remains to be among the highest compared to the latest figures from major Asian emerging economies. This is expected to further ease as the economy advances towards a safe reopening and recovery.

<sup>19</sup> The PDP target range for youth unemployment rate is based on the October LFS rounds, hence, best comparable to October 2021 rather than the YTD figure.

**Table 6. Latest unemployment rates across selected Asian economies**

Indicator	Unemployment Rate	Month Released
China <sup>a</sup>	3.9	September 2021
India <sup>b</sup>	7.6	July to August 2021
Indonesia <sup>c</sup>	6.5	August 2021
Malaysia <sup>b</sup>	4.8	July 2021
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>7.4</b>	October 2021
Vietnam <sup>a</sup>	3.5	September 2021

Notes: a/ Unemployment in these countries is reported quarterly (March, June, September, December); b/ Unemployment in these countries is reported monthly; c/ Indonesia unemployment is reported semi-annually (February and August)

**The share of economically inactive youth declined to 13.9 percent in October 2021 from 17.5 percent in July.**

**Table 7. Share of youth NEE and NEET to total youth population:  
 January 2020 – October 2021 (in percent)**

Indicator	2020 <sup>a,b</sup>				2021 <sup>p,a,b</sup>			
	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct	Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Share of youth NEE (%)	17.1	25.3	11.4	20.6	19.6	16.4	17.8	14.0
Share of youth NEET (%)	16.9	25.2	11.4	20.4	19.4	16.3	17.5	13.9

<sup>p</sup> Estimates are preliminary and may change; <sup>a</sup> Estimates are based on 2015 CPH population projections; <sup>b</sup> Estimates for quarterly round of the LFS, no estimates for monthly round

Source: LFS, PSA

22. The proportion and number of youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET) dropped to 13.9 percent (equivalent to 2.8 million) compared to 17.5 percent (equivalent to 3.5 million) in July. Youth NEET not in the labor force was substantially reduced (-785,000) while the number of unemployed youth NEET increased marginally (+103,000). Notably, the number of youth NEET citing the pandemic or lockdowns as the reason for not looking for work contributed the most to the overall reduction of youth NEET. The resumption of the school year in public schools in September may also have contributed to the reduction of youth NEET. This may further improve in the coming survey rounds as the pilot face-to-face classes also begins.

**Moving forward, there is a need to shift from a pandemic to an endemic paradigm, which will shift the Filipinos' mindset to learn how to live with the virus. This will require a shift in the policy agenda and the implementation of the 10-point policy agenda that will cover the following areas: 1) metrics; 2) vaccination; 3) healthcare capacity; 4) economy and mobility; 5) schooling; 6) domestic travel; 7) international travel; 8) digital transformation; 9) pandemic flexibility bill; and 10) medium-term preparation for pandemic resilience.**

23. Changing the government's primary metrics for decision-making, monitoring, and reporting to the public will facilitate the paradigm shift towards an "endemic" mindset. For instance, instead of total cases and deaths, the metrics should focus on the total severe or critical cases, the case fatality ratio, and total vaccinated. Streamlining travel processes (e.g., removal of requirements, except for the vaccination card, and a single QR code for contact-tracing) will facilitate further mobility within the country and overseas.

24. Removing artificial barriers, such as categorizations A1 to A5, and expanding vaccination across regions and to children, ages 12 to 17 years and later on to ages 5 to 11 years, will accelerate vaccination efforts. Along with these, continuing implementation of the alert level system and the Prevent, Detect, Isolate, Treat, and Reintegrate + Vaccinate (PDITR+V) strategy, and expanding the public transport capacity will be key to attain the country's 2021 to 2022 headline targets.

Amidst the new threat of new variants, a risk-management strategy, particularly of resorting to granular lockdowns rather than general quarantines, will improve or sustain labor outcomes.

As of December 5, 2021, a total of 91.8 million doses have been rolled out. Almost half of the targeted population of essential economic workers are fully vaccinated while those who have received at least one dose have already exceeded the target.<sup>20</sup> The accelerated vaccination drive will go hand in hand with the government's efforts in strengthening the country's healthcare capacity to avert critical cases and deaths and sustain the safe reopening of the economy amid possible spikes from new variant.

25. Strengthening coordination efforts on disaster risk and management programs with local government units (LGU) in the short-term will lessen the employment impact of typhoons or calamities. In the long-term, efforts may shift toward investing in research and development (e.g., climate-resilient crop production), developing agricultural risk financing and insurance products, and investing in resilient infrastructure development (e.g., improved water management, and irrigation systems),<sup>21</sup> and leveraging digital technology to improve logistics, productivity, and resilience.

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<sup>20</sup> Target population for A4 is 28.3 million | Source: National Vaccination Operations Center Daily Vaccination Report as of November 14, 2021

<sup>21</sup> World Bank. "Building a Resilient Recovery Philippines Economic Update December 2020 Edition" [WorldBank.org](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34899/Philippines-Economic-Update-Building-a-Resilient-Recovery.pdf)  
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34899/Philippines-Economic-Update-Building-a-Resilient-Recovery.pdf>  
(accessed on June 3, 2021)

26. Fully implementing the recovery programs and the urgent passage of economic liberalization bills remains crucial in supporting the recovery. For instance, the amendments to the Public Service Act redefines the coverage of public utilities and proposes to remove foreign ownership restrictions in critical services sectors such as transportation and telecommunications, among others. This will encourage the entry of more players and help provide consumers with a wider range of choices and improved quality of services at more reasonable rates.
27. Finally, ensuring our resilience against future outbreaks is essential. This may not be the last pandemic we will need to manage in our lifetime. It is necessary to enact a pandemic flexibility bill. This will complement the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act. Moreover, a “pandemic playbook” will cull all the lessons we have learned over nearly two years of coping with COVID-19.