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JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

The EU Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+) assessment of the Republic of the Philippines

Accompanying the document

Joint Report to the European Parliament and the Council

on the Generalised Scheme of Preferences covering the period 2023-2025

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1. Executive Summary

The Philippines has been a beneficiary of the EU's Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) since 2015. From an economic perspective, the Philippines has benefited substantially from GSP+, and its utilisation rate remains high (80.4 % in 2024). The country is projected to reach upper middle-income status soon. Formal negotiations for a Philippines-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) were restarted in March 2024.

During the 2023–2025 reporting period¹ the Philippines has generally been on a positive trajectory. It has participated actively in GSP+ monitoring, including the EU monitoring mission of March 2025, which showed ongoing efforts to strengthen labour rights protections. At the same time, enforcement gaps remain - particularly in respect to human rights.

The Philippines has advanced in several areas linked to their GSP+ commitments. The administration has restructured its human rights architecture with the establishment of the Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination and approved a new multi-annual Human Rights Action Plan in 2024. It is too early to assess the effect on long standing structural problems. The overall concerns around persistent impunity and low levels of accountability for extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations and abuses remain, while some civil society, human rights defenders and media professionals are subject to pressure. Concerns have been expressed that anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws may still be used in ways that restrict civic space.

The Philippines has made some progress with regards to the implementation of labour rights notably on labour inspections and on freedom of association. However, further progress is still needed in addressing the very serious issues raised in relation to Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise. Positive efforts on forced and child labour need to be effectively monitored and evaluated.

In relation to the environment and climate several important reports were submitted, albeit the Philippines' 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is still due and monitoring bodies point to persistent challenges in implementation, enforcement outcomes, and data transparency, particularly at sub-national level and in sectors exposed to high environmental and climate risks.

As to good governance, drug policy has continued to shift from an excessively punitive approach towards a more balanced, health-based and people-centred model. However, persistent concerns regarding human rights violations, corruption within law-enforcement institutions, and social stigma associated with drug use continue to hinder the establishment of a fully effective and rights-based drug control system. Significant reforms remain necessary to strengthen transparency and oversight in public spending and procurement, and ensure independent investigation and prosecution of corruption cases, in particular those involving high-level officials.

To ensure continued GSP+ eligibility and increased compliance with international commitments, priorities for future engagement are to: ensure accountability for extrajudicial killings and other human rights abuses perpetrated during the war on drugs; address the persistent allegations of violence against trade unionists and the need for thorough investigation of all alleged longstanding violations; enhance coordination among national institutions on the environment and climate; and fully enforce anti-corruption laws.

2. Key developments

2.1 Political and economic developments

The six-year term of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. will end in 2028. Former President Rodrigo Duterte was detained in March 2025 following an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC)² related to allegations of crimes against humanity. The Philippines continue to play an active role in multilateral fora and international institutions.

The Philippines' economy continued to grow, though at a slower pace, with GDP growth expected to reach an average of 5.3 % between 2025 and 2027, down from 5.7 % in 2024 and 5.5 % in 2023. This slower growth reflected a consumption slowdown, the impact of severe typhoons that disrupted agriculture, transportation, and construction as well as the weaker public spending in the last quarter of the year amid a corruption scandal in the area of flood control that prompted the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to warn that governance scandals and political infighting could weaken public-sector credibility, disrupt policy implementation, and erode safeguards against corruption. Poverty has dropped from 16.9 % in 2023 to an estimated 14.5 % in 2025³.

According to World Bank projections (2025) the Philippines is on the verge of graduating to upper-middle-income status⁴. In the meantime, the country still fulfils the economic criteria to maintain GSP+ status.

Since 2022, EU-Philippines relations have further deepened across political, economic, governance, and security areas within the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). In March 2024, both sides formally resumed negotiations for a comprehensive and modern FTA after a seven-year pause, aligning with the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

2.2 GSP+ trade impact

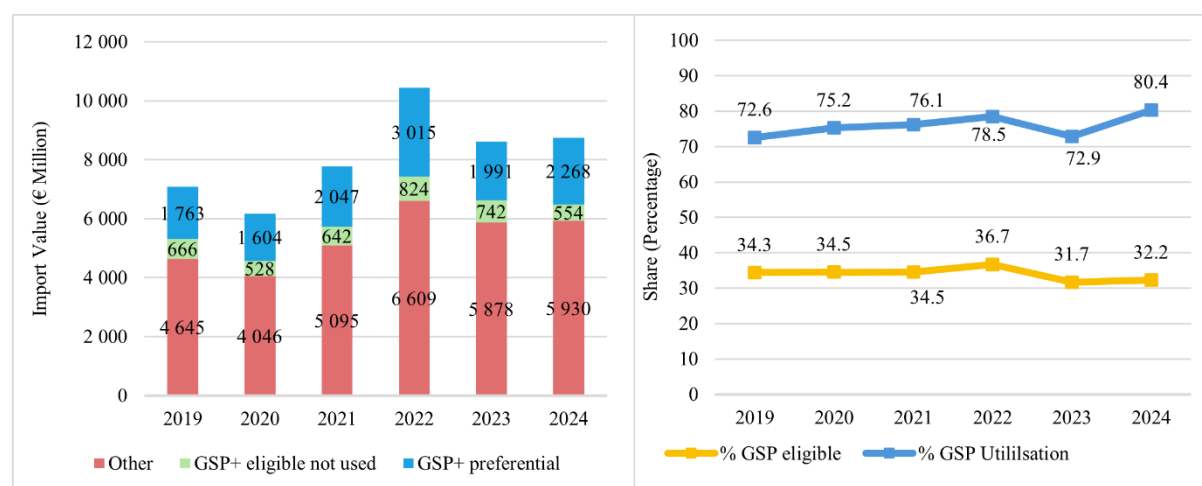
Between 2022 and 2024⁵, EU imports from the Philippines decreased by 8.5 % per year, from EUR 10.4 billion in 2022 to EUR 8.8 billion in 2024. Imports of GSP+ eligible products also decreased, from EUR 3.8 billion in 2022 to EUR 2.8 billion in 2024, representing a 14.3 % annual decline. However, these values are still above pre-pandemic levels and indicate a stable trend. The GSP+ utilisation rate increased slightly over the past three years, from 78.5 % in 2022 to 80.4 % in 2024, the highest recorded to date, indicating continued strong use of preferences by exporters.

As a result of GSP +, the Philippines benefited from an estimated EUR 155 million in tariff exemptions in 2024. This corresponds to around 2 % of the Philippines' export value to the EU in 2024.

Figure 1. EU imports from the Philippines and GSP+ utilisation rate, 2019-2024

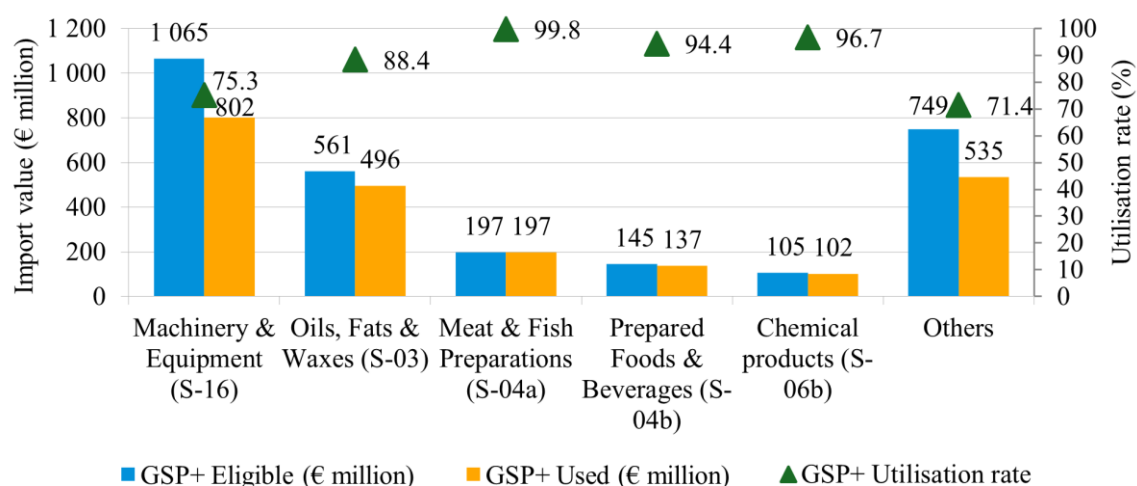
Indicators	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Annual Growth (2022-2024)
Total imports, (EUR million)	7 075.1	6 177.4	7 783.6	10 448.1	8 610.7	8 753.0	-8.5 %
GSP+ eligible, (EUR million)	2 429.9	2 131.8	2 688.6	3 839.0	2 732.9	2 822.5	-14.3 %
GSP+ used, (EUR million)	1 763.5	1 603.7	2 046.9	3 015.1	1 991.4	2 268.2	-13.3 %
Share of GSP+ eligible in total	34.3 %	34.5 %	34.5 %	36.7 %	31.7 %	32.2 %	
GSP+ utilisation rate	72.6 %	75.2 %	76.1 %	78.5 %	72.9 %	80.4 %	
MFN=0 % imports, (EUR million)	4 637.3	4 041.4	5 089.9	6 592.4	5 886.7	5 945.6	-5.0 %
Share of MFN=0 % imports	65.5 %	65.4 %	65.4 %	63.1 %	68.4 %	67.9 %	

Figure 2. EU imports from the Philippines by trade regime and utilisation rates, 2019-2024



The sectors⁶ benefiting the most from GSP+ preferences in 2024 were (in order of EU import value) Machinery & Equipment (S-16), Oils, Fats & Waxes (S-03), Meat and Fish Preparations (S-04a), Prepared Foods & Beverages (S-04b), and Chemical products (S-06b). Machinery & Equipment accounted for the largest share of total EU imports from the Philippines among the top five sectors, with a moderate utilisation rate at 75.3 %. Among the top five export sectors, Meat & Fish Preparations recorded the highest GSP+ utilisation rate at 99.8 %.

Figure 3. Top product groups benefiting from GSP+ tariff preferences for the Philippines, 2024



3. Compliance with GSP+ obligations:

The Philippines has maintained ratification of all 27 GSP+ relevant conventions, has issued no new reservations and is broadly compliant with its reporting obligations to the monitoring bodies (see Annex 1). This section is based on the latest United Nations (UN) monitoring body reports and supplemented with information from civil society and GSP monitoring. The Philippines has also continuously engaged in the EU GSP+ monitoring process through regular exchanges of information, including at high level events, and a GSP+ monitoring mission in March 2025.

3.1 Human rights

On the positive side, the Philippines has taken steps to strengthen its human rights framework, including restructuring national institutions and adopting new plans to improve the protection and fulfilment of human rights. It has also increased **engagement with the UN human rights system**. The 4th Philippine Human Rights Plan (PHRP 2024–2028) was launched in December 2024⁷, and a Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination was created in May 2024 to continue the work of the UN Joint Programme. A National Forensics Institute was launched in June 2025, and a mid-term review of recommendations from the 2022 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) has begun. A draft Commission on Human Rights Charter Act remains pending in Parliament.

Despite these developments, implementation challenges persist - especially at local level - in ensuring accountability, protecting freedom of expression and civic space, preventing torture, and ensuring non-discrimination and protection of vulnerable groups.

The Government took steps towards investigating some extra-judicial killings and other violations and abuses, notably those committed during the war on drugs under the previous administration. High-profile congressional hearings on police misconduct were initiated in August 2024; a task force was created in November 2024, and ex-President Rodrigo Duterte was handed over to the ICC in March 2025 for crimes against humanity. The Philippines confirmed its strong stance against extra-judicial killings, and numbers have decreased. However, the number of convictions to date remains limited, and incidents of human rights defenders, journalists and Indigenous Peoples being threatened, subject to enforced

disappearances, or killed continue to occur⁸. The Philippines has adopted legislation against enforced disappearances. The approval of a draft **Human Rights Defenders Protection Act** (Senate Bill 2447 - 2023) is pending⁹.

In 2024, the Supreme Court¹⁰ ruled that red-tagging (the practice of maliciously labelling individuals or organisations as communists or terrorists) endangers the life, security and liberty of targeted individuals, yet accusations against human rights defenders and civil society actors continue to be made, even if they became less frequent¹¹. Bills that define and criminalise red-tagging remain pending in parliament¹². The Philippines improved its press freedom ranking to 116 out of 180, but structural concerns persist, including attacks against journalists, weak protection mechanisms, political pressure on media outlets and limited safeguards for civic space¹³. Concerns have been expressed that legislation, notably anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws, may still be used in ways that restrict civic space, coupled with instances of legal harassment and intimidation (e.g., through strategic lawsuits against public participation, ‘SLAPP’).

Bills¹⁴ to establish an independent National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT) are still pending. Prison overcrowding and prolonged pre-trial detention persist¹⁵, despite government efforts to build new facilities and expand legal aid.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) issued concluding observations on the Philippines on 25 March 2025¹⁶. It welcomed the legislative, institutional and policy measures taken to increase the protection of economic, social and cultural rights, while noting the limited direct application of the covenant by domestic courts, especially at lower levels. The Committee recommended taking steps to ensure **accountability** for business-related human rights violations, environmental and community consultations on development projects, respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their access to basic services¹⁷.

The Philippines rose to 20th in the 2025 Global Gender Gap Index, the best ranking in Asia. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹⁸ noted positive legislative developments related to **women rights**. However, it expressed concern about continuing violence, insecurity, and insufficient progress for marginalised women and girls facing intersecting discrimination. Comprehensive anti-discrimination laws are yet to be adopted, and discrimination persists on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as in healthcare and education quality, particularly in rural and remote areas, while the absolute prohibition of abortion and limited access to reproductive health care remain concerns. The adoption of the ‘Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Act’¹⁹, aimed at addressing the high teenager pregnancy rates, is still pending. A socio-economic impact assessment of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Plan for 2019–2025 is needed. In addition, women continue to have limited access to land ownership, loans and other financial services. Women remain under-represented in the parliament, political parties, and senior public service roles and there are no gender quotas.

The Philippines adopted the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act (Republic Act No 11930) in 2023 and launched the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) 2024-2028 in July 2024. These measures aim to strengthen **child protection** systems, enhance child participation, and integrate climate resilience considerations²⁰.

The Philippine government and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) launched a data driven platform in 2024 to strengthen policymaking and child-rights-monitoring²¹. School enrolment has partly recovered but remains below pre-pandemic-levels, while kindergarten and high-school rates are at or higher than before the pandemic but are declining²². Child poverty initially decreased in 2023 but worsened in 2025 following multiple typhoons and an earthquake that caused severe damage to homes, schools and other infrastructure²³.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted in 2023 that the Philippines has yet to adopt a comprehensive **anti-discrimination** law and raised concerns about threats and killings targeting indigenous human rights defenders and leaders of ethno-religious and ethno-linguistic communities. It also highlighted the absence of explicit criminalisation of racist hate speech and hate crimes, citing reports of hate speech by government and public officials²⁴.

Priorities for future engagement include ensuring accountability, including in domestic courts and through cooperation with the ICC. Further efforts are needed to strengthen the responses to enforced disappearances and practice of red-tagging and protecting civic space and freedom of the media and of expression. The Philippines is encouraged to adopt pending human rights legislation including the Commission on Human Rights Charter Act bill and comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Further efforts are needed to establish a National Preventive Mechanism complying with the obligations of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and addressing prison overcrowding and prolonged pre-trial detentions. In terms of implementation, the Philippines is encouraged to apply anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws and the Cyber Crime Prevention Act in a manner which does not interfere with the legitimate activities of civil society, human rights defenders and journalists. Likewise, they are encouraged to continue efforts to ensure access to basic services for communities living in condition of poverty, Indigenous Peoples and population in remote areas, including those affected by natural disasters in 2025.

3.2 Labour Rights

During the reporting period, the Philippines made some progress in the implementation of labour standards, notably by ratifying the ILO Convention concerning Labour Inspection in Industry and Commerce, No 81 (1947) (Convention, No. 81) in 2024 and by adopting the Omnibus Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Civil Liberties. However, further progress is still needed in addressing issues related to freedom of association. Continued efforts are needed to fight anti-union discrimination, red-tagging, enforced disappearances and the use of SLAPP against worker representatives and trade union activists. These efforts should be embedded in a long-term sustainable, horizontal framework to facilitate and encourage social dialogue and collective bargaining on all levels. A reform of the right to organise and collective bargaining for many categories of workers is long overdue, to ensure that all workers are covered by the ILO Convention concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively, No 98 (1949) (Convention No. 98), subject only to the limited exceptions provided in Convention 98, namely the armed forces and the police, and public servants engaged in the administration of the State.

The Government has continued its fight to eliminate **child labour**, with the approval of the Programme Against Child Labour (PPACL) Strategic Framework 2023–28 and the adoption of the Action Plan for its implementation²⁵, still to be evaluated. Data published by the Philippine Statistics Authority in November 2025 suggests that the total number of working children who were engaged in child labour was 678 000 in 2023 and estimated at 509 000 in 2024. The Government provided data on inspections conducted but excluded the informal economy²⁶.

The ratification of ILO Convention No 81 on labour inspection will open a window of opportunity to step up efforts on inspections in this regard.

The Government has adopted new legislation and a policy framework to end **discrimination against women** in the workplace, promote gender equality and set out working conditions in some sectors, such as domestic work. A further positive development during the reporting period was the ratification in 2024, of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), making the Philippines the first country in Asia to ratify this convention. Challenges include a low female labour market participation, occupational segregation, and a disadvantaged position of women for wage levels and access to education, training, and prospects for professional development. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions (CEACR) has urged the Government to ensure that several pending legislative proposals with regards to anti-discrimination at the workplace are adopted without delay to improve effective legal protection against discrimination based on sex (and the other grounds, especially workers in vulnerable situations, such as persons with disabilities).

The International Labour Conference's Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) has repeatedly²⁷ raised serious concerns on the situation of **freedom of association and collective bargaining**, confirmed by the CEACR, after an ILO High Level Tripartite Mission visited the Philippines in 2023, and whose recommendations still need to be fully implemented. The 2026 CEACR report notes significant institutional steps taken including continued implementation of the tripartite road map of 2023, elevation of the 2024 Omnibus Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Civil Liberties into Executive Order No 97 in 2025²⁸. At the same time, the Committee points out persistent allegations of harassment, arbitrary arrest and protracted criminal proceedings against trade unionists, and reiterates the need for thorough investigation of all alleged violations since 2015 and effective measures against impunity. Red-tagging remains an issue in labour relations as well.

In its 2026 report CEACR underlined the need to align the Labour Code fully with ILO Convention concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, No 87 (1948) (Convention No. 87), broaden access to collective bargaining for currently excluded categories of workers, remove undue restrictions on bargaining in sectors such as electricity, and take further measures to expand collective bargaining coverage²⁹. It remains low – according to ILOSTAT, only around 1.4 % of employees in the country are covered by collective agreements – which has been repeatedly noted with concern by CEACR³⁰.

Trafficking in human beings within the country and across borders has been a concern for years. The institutional framework for **forced labour** was reinforced with the launching of the 4th National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons 2023–2027 in April 2023, and the setting up of mechanisms to act upon requests for assistance, inquiries and referrals for victims of trafficking. In terms of enforcement, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) guidelines of April 2023 are meant to aid government institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the investigation, reporting and monitoring of corruption-related trafficking in persons cases. The Government has continued efforts to identify and support victims of trafficking, and the identification, prosecution, and conviction of perpetrators³¹.

Beyond policies to countertrafficking in human beings, little information is available on the domestic definition and implementation of the much wider concept of forced labour as defined by international labour standards. Labour inspection on forced labour needs to be further developed for the whole territory under Philippine jurisdiction. Effective implementation of

Convention No 81 should be stepped up to identify, monitor and counter incidences of forced labour in all its forms.

CEACR requested to end criminalisation of the expression of political views or opposition or peaceful participation in strikes³². CAS also questioned the wide definition of ‘terrorist act’ under the Anti-Terrorism Act, which provides for life imprisonment, also for acts of advocacy, protest, dissent and other exercises of civil and political rights which are not intended to endanger a person’s life or create a serious risk to public safety³³.

Priorities for future engagement include the effective implementation of Convention No 87 and addressing the persistent allegations of violence and discrimination against trade unionists and the need for thorough investigation of all alleged longstanding violations and broadening access to and facilitating collective bargaining. Further priorities are the strengthening of the labour inspection system, including in the informal economy and in the fight against forced labour, while effectively implementing the international definition of forced labour, ending the criminalisation of the expression of political views and the peaceful participation in strikes; and removing and rehabilitating child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

3.3 Environment and climate

Overall, in the reporting period, the Philippines engaged constructively with the international compliance framework, while facing structural and capacity-related implementation gaps.

The Philippines has remained constructively engaged for the protection of **biodiversity**: the CITES Secretariat records no current recommendation to suspend trade³⁴. The country has also taken practical steps to strengthen implementation, notably through the initial rollout of its electronic CITES permitting system in December 2024, while environment and customs authorities have continued joint action against wildlife smuggling at major border points³⁵. Overall, the recent picture is one of steady institutional effort and improving administrative tools, even, as the Secretariat indicates, some legal and regulatory measures are still being finalised before the Philippines can be regarded as fully aligned under the Convention’s legislative framework³⁶.

Policy work on biodiversity focused on steps to update national biodiversity strategies and targets. Progress is noted in protected area management, albeit with persistent pressures from habitat loss, land-use change, pollution, and climate impacts, alongside uneven local implementation capacity and data gaps. In August 2025, the updated Philippines National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP 2024-2040) was launched.

A key development in the current period is the entry into force of the Basel Convention amendments on waste electrical and electronic equipment on 1 January 2025³⁷. Otherwise, relevant policy developments focused on plastics and **waste governance**, to strengthen accountability for plastic packaging waste recovery and diversion³⁸. In May 2024, the National Solid Waste Management Commission issued a national Plastic Roadmap, signalling further measures to reduce non-recyclable single-use plastics³⁹.

Concerning **climate protection**, the Philippines entered the Kigali implementation phase, with the aim to strengthen hydrofluorocarbon control measures in line with Kigali schedules, ensure timely and accurate Article 7 data reporting⁴⁰, and sustain close coordination with importers and servicing sectors to prevent illegal trade and support the transition to climate-friendly alternatives^{41 42}. During 2023–2025, implementation involved sustained engagement with importers and the services sector, regular coordination meetings, and public awareness

activities linked to World Ozone Day and World Ozone Month^{43 44}. In December 2023, the Executive Committee approved the first tranche of Stage III of the Hydrochlorofluorocarbon Phase-out Management Plan, providing a structured pathway for compliance actions during 2024–2025 and supporting the phase-out of remaining hydrochlorofluorocarbon consumption by 2030.

The Philippines submitted its first Biennial Transparency Report in March 2025⁴⁵ under the enhanced transparency framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), while policy efforts have continued to focus on implementing the NDC submitted in April 2021 under the Paris Agreement. The 2021 NDC sets a target of up to 75 % reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to a business-as-usual scenario, of which 2.71 % is unconditional and 72.29 % is conditional on international support⁴⁶. The Government of the Philippines is currently preparing its next NDC covering the 2035 timeframe, in line with the five-year update cycle under the Paris Agreement. At the time of reporting, this next NDC had not yet been communicated to the UNFCCC.

The Philippines made only moderate advancements in **managing persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and pesticides**: No new overarching legislation was adopted, and policy focused on updating inventories of POPs, managing obsolete stockpiles, and aligning national controls with amendments adopted under the Convention, including newly listed substances⁴⁷. Progress continued in phasing out legacy POPs and improving waste management practices. At the same time, challenges remain in relation to contaminated sites, capacity for environmentally sound disposal, data gaps on unintentional releases, and enforcement at local level^{48 49}.

Priorities for future engagement on environmental protection include strengthening compliance and enforcement across wildlife trade, hazardous waste, and chemicals management, including improved follow-through from inspections and seizures to prosecutions, convictions, and sanctions, supported by regular public reporting of results. New challenges have arisen as from 2025, in relation to the additional international obligations on waste electrical and electronic equipment^{50 51}, under the Basel Convention, as well as in relation to the ongoing obligations under the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. Additional efforts could be made to accelerate biodiversity protection⁵² and step up chemicals management, including improved planning, inventories, and capacity for environmentally sound disposal of persistent organic pollutants and hazardous wastes. Finally, to deliver on climate commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, the Philippines needs to adopt concrete sectoral action^{53 54} to strengthen greenhouse gas inventories and transparency systems, as well as scale up adaptation and resilience measures in response to extreme weather events.

3.4 Good governance

On **drugs**, in its reports, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has been reiterating concerns about the lack of progress in advancing the planning of the INCB country mission, which INCB has requested since 2017 and to which the Government had agreed in principle.

On the positive side, the INCB noted that the current Administration has taken steps to address human rights violations in the implementation of drug control measures, such as the Philippine Drug Policy and Law Reform Summit held in 2024 in Manila, to revise national drug policies towards a more balanced health-based and human-rights-centred approach to drugs, moving away from an excessively punitive approach and reducing stigma, increasing focus on combating organised crime, and supporting alternatives to incarceration where appropriate. As

part of this initiative, the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) presented the proposed Enhanced Philippine Anti-Illegal Drug Strategy (E-PADS)⁵⁵, the Government's comprehensive framework for drug control, which advances a balanced and evidence-based strategy built on supply reduction, drug demand reduction, and the provision of health, social, and developmental services⁵⁶. In February 2025, the Department of Justice and the DDB announced the start of the executive review of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (RA 9165)⁵⁷. Key components of this strategy include expansion of rehabilitation programmes and community-based initiatives, community outreach, drug education and comprehensive prevention efforts, all aimed at addressing the underlying causes of drug use. The Philippines is also actively engaging with international partners to implement evidence-based programming to address the drug crisis.

On the negative side, the legislative reform needed has not yet taken place, and human rights violations, corruption within law-enforcement institutions and social stigma associated with drug dependence remain significant obstacles to achieving a fully effective and rights-based drug control system.

Since the publication of the 2023 United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) implementation review report⁵⁸, there have been several relevant developments in **anti-corruption** policies. The Philippines' progress in combating corruption, particularly in the areas of public procurement and money-laundering prevention, has been formally recognised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)⁵⁹. In Transparency International's 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), however, the Philippines continued the downward trend observed since 2023, where it ranked 120th out of 180 assessed nations, dropping six places compared to 2024⁶⁰.

In July 2024, the Philippines enacted a new procurement framework⁶¹. It incorporates open-contracting principles - such as disclosure of contract information, transparent bidding processes, and publication of procurement data - and introduces sustainable procurement elements, including inclusivity, environmental and social criteria, for the first time in Philippine law. The revised whistleblowing and integrity program issued in February 2025 is a step towards a more systematic whistle-blower protection and reporting framework. On 11 September 2025, in the wake of a corruption scandal regarding flood control management projects, President Marcos Jr issued Executive Order No 94 establishing the Independent Commission on Infrastructure (ICI), to investigate flood control and other infrastructure projects implemented since 2015. While the ICI has wound down its operations by 31 March 2026 as it considered that its mandate was fulfilled, investigations found that hundreds of billions to trillions of pesos may have been lost to corruption involving contractors, public officials, and members of Congress. The ICI has turned over the evidence from its investigations to the Philippine Ombudsman and Justice Department for further follow-up and potential judicial action.

Following the adoption of the new National Anti-Money Laundering (AML) / Counter-Terrorism Financing (CFT) / Counter-Proliferation Financing (CPF) Strategy 2023–2027 (NACS 2023–2027)⁶², the Philippines made sufficient progress in addressing previously identified AML/CFT deficiencies⁶³, and since February 2025 the country is no longer subject to increased monitoring by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) - meaning it has been removed from the *'grey list'*⁶⁴.

Priorities for future engagement related to **drugs** include strengthening cooperation with the INCB, including to facilitate the INCB country mission, which is long overdue despite

extensive outreach by the Board and could not take place in 2025 due to the UN funding situation, and also intensify investigations into alleged human rights violations committed during the war on drugs to ensure justice for victims and their families. It also includes implementation of the balanced, evidence-based and comprehensive approach to drugs, including access to voluntary treatment, rehabilitation and recovery programmes and services. Priorities related to **anti-corruption** include strengthening the enforcement of anti-corruption laws by ensuring that corruption cases - particularly those involving high-level officials - are investigated independently, prosecuted in a timely manner, and resolved with meaningful sanctions, while simultaneously improving transparency and oversight in public spending and procurement, especially in high-risk sectors.

4. Cooperation

The EU has allocated EUR 225 million for the Philippines for the 2021–2027 period. Additionally, Philippines benefits from a variety of EU programmes and investments through the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+), the main financial mechanism of the Global Gateway Strategy. Through the various instruments, the EU supports two main priority sectors in the country: 1) green and digital transition, and 2) good governance and the peace process in Mindanao. Both priorities align with the Philippines Development Plan, and the Global Gateway and Indo-Pacific Strategies.

This is complemented by Team Europe, which is a collaborative effort involving in the Philippines the EU, Belgium, Germany, Finland, France, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Norway, with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and Member States' development banks.

Protecting and promoting human rights and democracy is a key priority of EU external action in the Philippines. The EU Human Rights and Democracy (HRD) Thematic Programme supports the project 'From Commitments to Compliance: Strengthening Trade Union-Led Civil Society Action for Labour, Climate and Rights Accountability in the Philippines'. This project strengthens rights-based governance in the Philippines by enhancing civil society's capacity to monitor and influence the implementation of international conventions, including ILO conventions. The action trains civil society and trade unions and equips them with international convention monitoring and baseline assessments tools; promotes multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms for civil society–state engagement and supports independent monitoring outputs to be produced and submitted to UN bodies. The action secures formal civil society roles in national and international convention compliance frameworks.

Annex: The Philippines - Compliance with GSP ratification and reporting obligations

Convention	Ratification status / Reservations	Compliance with reporting obligations to monitoring bodies
Human Rights		
1. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948)	Ratified: 07.07.1950 Reservations on Articles 4, 6, 7, 9 ¹	No reporting obligations
2. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)	Ratified: 15.09.1967 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last Committee report: 28.04.2023 • Last report submitted: 06.07.2021 • Next report due: 04.01.2028
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)	Ratified: 23.10.1986 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last Committee report: 30.11.2022 • Last report submitted: 31.05.2019 • Next report due: 31.10.2029
4. International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (1966)	Ratified: 07.06.1974 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last Committee report: 28.02.2025 • Last report submitted: 12.01.2022 • Next report due: 31.03.2030
5. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)	Ratified: 05.08.1981 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last Committee report: 23.10.2023 • Last report submitted: 02.07.2021 • Next report due: not yet set
6. Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)	Ratified: 18.06.1986 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last Committee report: 13.05.2016 • Last report submitted: 21.06.2022 • Next report due: not yet set
7. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)	Ratified: 21.08.1990 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last Committee report: 29.09.2022 • Last report submitted: 01.03.2019 • Next report due: 19.09.2027
Labour rights ²³		
8. Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour, No 29 (1930)	Ratified: 15.07.2005	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments: 2024 • Last Government report submitted: 2023 • Next report due: not yet set

¹ Permitted reservation according to the monitoring body, see United Nations Treaty Collection, as of 11.01.2026.

² Following a decision taken by the ILO Governing Body in November 2025 to modernise the ILO reporting system, as from 2027 Governments will no longer submit separate reports for each ratified Convention, but instead, they will submit thematic reports based on a new ILO template which has grouped the conventions and protocols into 15 thematic areas. As 2026 will be a transition year, only a limited number of reports will be requested in 2026. See: The future of reporting on ratified conventions. <https://www.ilo.org/international-labour-standards/applying-and-promoting-international-labour-standards-overview-ilo/future-reporting-ratified-conventions>.

³ Reservations do not apply in the ILO system.

Convention	Ratification status / Reservations	Compliance with reporting obligations to monitoring bodies
9. Convention concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, No 87 (1948)	Ratified: 29.12.1953	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments: 2025 • Last Government report submitted: 2025 • Next report due: not yet set
10. Convention concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively, No 98 (1949)	Ratified: 29.12.1953	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments: 2025 • Last Government report submitted: 2025 • Next report due: not yet set
11. Convention concerning Equal Remuneration of Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, No 100 (1951)	Ratified: 29.12.1953	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments: 2025 • Last Government report submitted: 2024 • Next report due: not yet set
12. Convention concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, No 105 (1957)	Ratified: 17.11.1960	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments: 2024 • Last Government report submitted: 2024 • Next report due: not yet set
13. Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, No 111 (1958)	Ratified: 17.11.1960	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments: 2025 • Last Government report submitted: 2024 • Next report due: not yet set
14. Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, No 138 (1973)	Ratified: 04.06.1998 Minimum age specified: 15 years	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments in 2023 • Last Government report submitted in 2023 • Next report due: not yet set
15. Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, No 182 (1999)	Ratified: 28.11.2000	Compliant with reporting obligations • Last CEACR comments: 2023 • Last Government report submitted: 2023 • Next report due: not yet set
Environment and Climate		
16. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973)	Ratified: 18.08.1981. No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Annual Trade Report for 2023 submitted 29.10.2024 • Annual Trade Report for 2024 submitted 31.10.2025 • Next Annual Trade Report due 31.10.2026 • Last Annual Illegal Trade Reports: submitted for 2024 and 2023⁴ • Last Implementation Reports: Submitted for 2018-2020⁵.
17. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987)	Ratified: 17.07.1991 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations Last report submitted: • Article 7 data report covering 2024 Next report: • Article 7 data report covering 2025 due 30.9.2026
18. Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (1989)	Ratified: 21.10.1993 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • National Report (NR) for 2023 submitted 31.12.2024 • NR for 2024 submitted 31.12.2025 • Next NR (2025) due 31.12.2026

⁴ Reporting mandatory but not subject to compliance procedure.

⁵ Ibid.

Convention	Ratification status / Reservations	Compliance with reporting obligations to monitoring bodies
19. Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)	Ratified: 08.10.1993 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Seventh National Report (7NR) submitted 6.03.2026 • Last National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) update: 2016 (until 2028) • Next report: 8NR due by 30.06.2029
20. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)	Ratified: 02.08.1994 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Latest updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC): NDC 1 on 15.04.2021 • Latest National Communication (NC): NC2 submitted 29.12.2014 • NC3 due: 31.12.2018 (not submitted) • NC4 due: 31.12. 2022 (not submitted) • First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1) submitted on 31.03.2025 • Next report due: BTR2 due 31.12.2026
21. Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000)	Ratified: 05.10.2006 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Latest National Report: 5NR submitted 02.02.2026 • Next report due: not yet set
22. Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (2001)	Ratified: 27.02.2004 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations • Latest National Report: 5th NR submitted 11.11.2022 • Next report: 6th NR due by 31.08.2026 • Initial National Implementation Plan (NIP): submitted 19.06. 2006 • NIP updates: COP4 and COP5 amendments included
23. Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1998)	Ratified: 20.11.2003	No reporting obligations separate from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Good Governance		
24. United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)	Ratified: 02.10.1967 No reservations.	Compliant with reporting obligations 2024 reporting fulfilled (INCB mission has been requested by the INCB since 2017 but has not yet taken place)
25. United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)	Ratified: 07.06.1974 No reservations	
26. United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)	Ratified: 07.06.1996 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations 2025 reporting fulfilled
27. United Nations Convention against Corruption (2004)	Ratified: 08.11.2006 No reservations	Compliant with reporting obligations First review cycle completed in 2013; second review cycle completed in June 2023. Both the Executive Summary and full Country Review Report are publicly available.

¹ Key events in 2026 at the moment of writing have been included in this Staff Working Document. All links provided were up to date as of 28 April 2026.

² International Criminal Court, ‘Duterte case’ ICC-01/21-01/25, 2025.

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/philippines/duterte>.

³ World Bank, ‘Philippines: Macro Poverty Outlook’, October 2025.

<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/c6aceb75bed03729ef4ff9404dd7f125-0500012021/related/mpo-phl.pdf>.

⁴ World Bank, ‘Country Partnership Framework for the Philippines’, 5 May 2025.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/8842a2df-6d80-441c-a309-af72c9497687/content>.

⁵ Source for all statistics in point 2.2: Eurostat data covering 2022-2024 based on latest available validated full year data as of September 2025. GSP statistics only cover goods imported into the EU market, i.e., goods released for free circulation in the EU. The GSP statistics do not cover other EU-imports, like goods imported for the customs inward processing procedure or re-imports after the customs outward processing procedure. Trade flows registered as ‘confidential’ do not appear in the GSP+ usage figures and regime 1 normal trade; but do appear in total trade figures (regime 4).

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/ext_go_agg_esms.htm#conf1537195068659

⁶ Products that benefit from GSP are separated in sections according to the GSP Regulation. Information on which CN codes are included in the GSP sections can be found in Annex V of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02012R0978-20250101>.

⁷ United Nations, ‘The Fourth Philippine Human Rights Plan launched’, 12 Dec. 2024.

<https://philippines.un.org/en/285724-fourth-philippine-human-rights-plan-launched>.

⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, ‘Concluding observations on the combined twenty-first to twenty-fifth periodic reports of the Philippines’, 23 May 2023, paragraph 23.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cerdcpnlco21-25-concluding-observations-combined-twenty-first>.

⁹ ‘Human Rights Defenders Protection Act’, Senate Bill No. 2447, 19th Congress, Senate of the Philippines, 21 Sep. 2023. https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=19&q=SBN-2447.

¹⁰ ‘Red-Tagging Threatens Right to Life, Liberty, and Security’, Supreme Court of the Philippines, 8 May 2024. <https://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/sc-red-tagging-threatens-right-to-life-liberty-and-security/>

¹¹ United Nations Human Rights Council, ‘Visit to the Philippines: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression’, 4 Jun. 2025, para. 22. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc5950add1-visit-philippines-report-special-rapporteur-promotion-and>.

¹² Senate of the Philippines, ‘An Act defining and penalizing the crime of red-tagging’, Senate Bill No 1071, 20th Congress, 6 Aug. 2025. https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=20&q=SBN-1071; Senate of the Philippines Legislative Reference Bureau, ‘House Bill No 1152, 19th Congress’. <https://ldr.senate.gov.ph/bills/house-bill-no-1152-19th-congress>; and Senate of the Philippines Legislative Reference Bureau, ‘House Bill No 4941, 19th Congress’. <https://ldr.senate.gov.ph/bills/house-bill-no-4941-19th-congress>.

¹³ Reporters Without Borders, ‘Press Freedom Index 2025: Philippines’, 2025.

<https://rsf.org/en/country/philippines>.

¹⁴ Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, ‘Statement of the Commission on Human Rights lauding the proposed bills that seek to establish a National Preventive Mechanism’, 11 Apr. 2024. <https://chr.gov.ph/chr-tag/national-preventive-mechanism>.

¹⁵ OHCHR, ‘Philippines in dire need of national torture prevention body, say UN experts’, 14 Dec. 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/12/philippines-dire-need-national-torture-prevention-body-say-un-experts>.

¹⁶ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of the Philippines’, 25 Mar. 2025. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4079315?ln=en&v=pdf>.

¹⁷ The Committee also draws attention to the Philippines’ vulnerability to climate change and the insufficiency of current mitigation and adaptation measures (para. 16). The Committee also criticises the ‘no new taxes’ policy, which limits fiscal space for social spending and education, and calls for a review of tax policies to enhance their redistributive effect (para. 20). The subsequent references to the concluding observations are included in brackets.

¹⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, ‘Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of the Philippines’, 14 Nov. 2023. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cedawcphlco9-concluding-observations-ninth-periodic-report>.

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- ²² Situation of Children, ‘Every child counts: Situation of Children 2025’, Presentation at the 11th Social Science Congress, Sept. 2025, p. 26. <https://www.situationofchildren.org/every-child-counts-situation-children-2025>.
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- ²⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO), ‘Observation (CEACR) on Convention No 138’, adopted 2023, published 112th ILC session, 2024. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNT_RY_ID:4358278,102970:NO. For a mid-term assessment of the PPACL see <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/289930>.
- ²⁶ Idem.
- ²⁷ In 2016, 2019, 2023 and 2024
- ²⁸ ILO, ‘Observation (CEACR) on Convention No 87’, adopted 2025, published in ‘Application of International Labour Standards 2026’, Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, February 2026. <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2026-02/Report%20III%28A%29-2026-%5BNORMES-251223-001%5D-Web-EN.pdf>.
- ²⁹ Idem.
- ³⁰ Idem.
- ³¹ ILO, ‘Observation (CEACR) on Convention No 2’, adopted 2024, published 113th ILC session, 2025. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID,P13100_COUNT_RY_ID:4417588,102970.
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<https://pod.emb.gov.ph/>.

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⁴⁵ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, 'First Biennial Transparency Report of the Philippines'. <https://unfccc.int/documents/646250>.

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<https://www.unodc.org/roseap/en/philippines/2024/12/anti-corruption/story.html> .

⁶⁰ Transparency International, 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2025: Philippines', Transparency International, 2026, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2025/index/phl>.

⁶¹ Republic of the Philippines, 'New Government Procurement Act', Republic Act No 12009. <https://ngpa.gppb.gov.ph/New-Government-Procurement-Act-RA-12009.pdf>

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