



# PHILIPPINE MAYORS FORUM

Innovation, Digital Governance, and Resiliency  
Building towards Accelerated Implementation of the  
2030 Agenda in the Philippines

**27 October 2023, 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM**

Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria, Quezon City  
Hybrid event (via Zoom Video Conferencing)  
[Live@Facebook](#)



2023 PHILIPPINE LOCAL GOVERNANCE FORUM  
Festival of Local EXcellence



UNITED NATIONS MONTH  
**SDGs: A Race We Can Win**



# CONCEPT NOTE

## 1. Event Description

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) of the Philippines, with the support of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) and its Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), and in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Philippines*, is organizing the **Philippine Mayors Forum: Innovation, Digital Governance, and Resiliency Building towards Accelerated Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Philippines** on 27 October 2023.

The forum is being organized in response to the expressed need for capacity development on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to bring to the Philippines the knowledge generated at the UN DESA Regional Symposium 2022 held in Korea. The forum will be attended by Mayors from cities and municipalities across the Philippines, National Government officials, UN representatives, and international experts joining as resource speakers.

The forum is based on the UN DESA's<sup>[1]</sup> Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Curriculum aims to promote a critical understanding of sustainable development issues, enhance governance capacity, and strengthen public servants' awareness of their active role in contributing to achieving the SDGs. It also recognizes the important role of local governments in accelerating development.

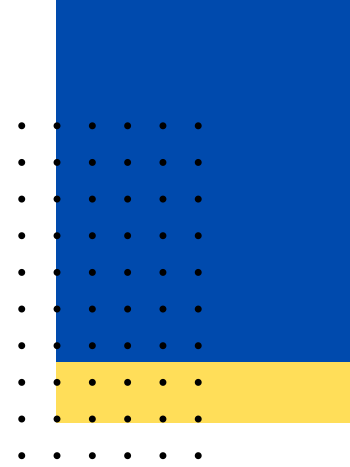
The Forum is part of a series of events that will be held throughout October for UN Month to highlight and strengthen the collaborations between the UN and partners in government, civil society, private sector and the international community. With the theme "SDGs: A Race We Can Win," which is part of the global campaign, we aim to amplify the drumbeat of opportunity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The forum will be conducted through a hybrid format, with an option to participate physically at Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria, Quezon City, or virtually via Zoom Video Conferencing. The forum will be conducted in English.

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[1] UN DESA uses the governance principles as a main reference point and overarching analytical framework to address common governance challenges and advance effective governance for sustainable development in response to country requests.

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## 2. Context

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs is a global 15-year plan of action that was adopted in 2015 to drive economic prosperity and social well-being while protecting the environment.

The 2030 Agenda makes reference to subnational efforts and local governments. All of the SDGs have targets that relate to the role of local governments in terms of their responsibilities in basic service delivery as well as their ability to promote and integrate inclusive and sustainable development. Two SDGs explicitly relate to SDG localization: SDG 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels") and SDG 11 ("Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"). Implementing these goals requires effective, accountable, and participatory institutions and places a particular responsibility on local governments. This is especially the case for SDG 11, which, as a standalone goal for sustainable cities and communities, recognizes sustainable urban and local development as a fundamental precondition of sustainable development.

Despite some advances, action to meet the SDGs is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required. The unprecedented and multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific has reinforced pre-existing obstacles to realizing the SDGs[2]. In the 2021 report "Our Common Agenda"[3], the UN Secretary-General proposed key actions to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs to make real difference in people's lives by encouraging solidarity, respect for human rights, better management of critical global commons, and global public goods.

The Philippines was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which reversed some development gains and forced the country to re-prioritize its strategies. In addition, the country was hit by external shocks and disasters triggered by natural hazards. In 2022, eighteen tropical cyclones entered the Philippines, and Typhoon Odette/Rai in 2021 brought massive destruction in several regions where a response was needed until 2022.[4]


Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 and other crises, the Philippines remains committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. In this context, the Philippines is pursuing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to sustainable development. The AmBisyon Natin 2040 is the country's long-term vision and collective aspiration for every Filipino to enjoy a strongly rooted, comfortable, and secure life. It lays the foundation for delivering on the country's commitment to 'leave no one behind'.

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[2] [Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2022- Widening disparities amid Covid-19](#)

[3] [UN Secretary-General's Report "Our Common Agenda"](#)

[4] <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-2022-significant-events-snapshot-11-january-2023>



The SDGs are at the core of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028, which serves as the country's overall economic blueprint in development planning for the next six years and envisions inclusive growth, building an environment that provides equal opportunities to all Filipinos and equipping them with skills to participate fully in an innovative and globally competitive economy. It is based on Marcos Jr. Administration's Eight-Point Socio-Economic Agenda and calls for transformation in all sectors – social, economic, institutional, and environmental to reinvigorate employment and reduce poverty in order to achieve a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient society.

The Third Voluntary National Review 2022, "Rekindling Commitment and Using Innovation to Accelerate Recovery and Ensure Progress to Achieve the SDGs in 2030" [5], presented at the High-Level Political Forum in 2022, shows that the Philippines is now on its way to recovery from COVID-19. It highlighted the country's enhancement of institutional mechanisms to quickly recover from COVID-19 and progress toward the SDGs. According to the United Nations Philippines 2021 Results and 2022 Prospects, the Philippines is turning its national BN 2040 into reality through building resilience and innovative mechanisms for implementation.

Cities and local governments are at the center of implementing the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028 and are considered "engines of growth" as most of the population, and economic activities are concentrated in these urban areas, thus the importance of achieving SDG 11. However, rapid urbanization and development pose great risks, such as growing inequality, lack of access to affordable services and facilities, pollution, security threats, climate change, and environmental degradation, among others. SDG 11, the Sendai Framework, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) place urbanization at the forefront of international development policy.[6] This recognition goes beyond viewing urbanization as simply a demographic phenomenon but a transformative process capable of galvanizing momentum for many aspects of global development. While the SDGs are global in their ambition, their achievement will depend on local action, leadership, and ownership.


The Supreme Court ruling on the Mandanas-Garcia petitions has carved a new path and presented better opportunities for local governments - one that leads towards a just share of the national budget and improved autonomy.[7] The ruling provides enhanced fiscal space for the local governments to more effectively plan and budget for climate-sensitive SDG-aligned local development. This is also an opportunity to improve service delivery, local response to conflict and crises, inter-governmental relations and transparency and accountability to the local constituents. At the same time, there is a need to strengthen the financial and technical capacity of the local governments, especially focusing on the weaker ones, to absorb the enhanced allocation of resources.

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[5] <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/philippines/voluntary-national-review-2022>

[6] <https://unhabitat.org/sdg-11-synthesis-report>

[7] <https://www.undp.org/philippines/publications/decentralization-digitalization-and-development-strengthening-local-governance-crisis-response-recovery-resilience-and>



Functional allocation needs to be based on the “principle of subsidiarity” and fiscal devolution linked to the local governments’ own revenue mobilization efforts, and decentralized responsibilities. The Mandanas-Garcia ruling will potentially boost efficient decentralized delivery of services and deepen democracy. A robust system of checks and balances may be put in place to prevent any undue political influence at the local level and to counter corruption. There is a need to build the capacity of groups at risk of being left behind, some of whom have representatives in local governments structures, to understand and be able to access adequate resources at the local level.

To ensure the achievement of the Philippine National Government's priority thrusts and objectives as well as its international commitments, the public sector must innovate. Innovation can be driven by promoting frontier technologies and digital government coupled with better partnerships with citizens, civil society, and the private sector. UN DESA is committed to ensuring the robust integration of the SDGs into national and local plans, policies, and frameworks; promoting innovative processes of effective governance at the subnational level to deliver quality public services; and working towards the localization of the SDGs as a crucial step to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

### 3. Objectives

The ***Philippine Mayors Forum: Innovation, Digital Governance, and Resiliency Building towards Accelerated Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Philippines*** aims to enhance the capacity of local governments to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, strengthen governance for improved public service delivery, and raise public servants' awareness of the active role they have to play in contributing to the country's progress towards achieving the SDGs and AmBisyon Natin 2040.


The forum will provide a platform for Mayors to better understand the strategies and approaches to national and local coordination to advance the progress toward the delivery of SDGs. During the Forum, critical issues on governance related national and local synergies, institutional arrangements, futures thinking, smart cities, and disaster resiliency will be discussed.

### 4. Thematic Areas

The forum will comprise of three thematic sessions structured on the following:

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[7] <https://www.undp.org/philippines/publications/decentralization-digitalization-and-development-strengthening-local-governance-crisis-response-recovery-resilience-and>



**Session 1: Multi-Level Governance on SDG Localization:** 2023 marks the mid-point in the implementation of the SDGs before the 2030 deadline, and efforts to achieve the desired outcomes must be increased. Local and regional governments have been crucial in addressing the impacts of current global challenges such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and prolonged conflicts, focusing on recovery and development that prioritizes care. Experience from the implementation process has shown that the 2030 Agenda must be put into action at the local level. Achieving the SDGs is only possible if healthy and effective multi-level governance systems are in place.

The session's objective is to generate greater engagement in the discourse surrounding multi-level governance, placing it as a key element for SDG localization and defining concrete actions to accelerate the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda. Further, the session aims to raise awareness about strategic planning and foresight and introduce tools and approaches to support the design of adaptive and future-ready SDG national and local strategies.

**Session 2: Fostering Enhanced Partnerships between Local Authorities and the UN in the Philippines:** This session will provide the UN with an opportunity to present the draft United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024-2028 and incorporate the views from local authorities.

**Session 3: Smart and Sustainable Communities:** Smart Governance, Innovation, and Enhanced Services for Sustainable Urban Development: This session aims to explore the crucial role of smart governance, innovation, and service delivery in building sustainable urban development in smart cities. It will delve into the topic of smart governance for sustainable development examining big data, innovations, smart and sustainable technology, open data, and citizen participation. The session will explore the significance of smart governance and innovation in public service delivery and in promoting sustainable urban development. Furthermore, the session will feature international good practices on smart city technologies and solutions that can serve as models for Philippine cities.

**Session 4: Strengthening Resilience through Effective Governance, Technology and Innovation:** This session will provide a comprehensive overview of the importance of building strong local institutions to enhance community resilience. Participants will have the opportunity to gain insights in the Making Cities Resilient 2030, which aims to strengthen the capacity of cities to manage disaster risk and reduce the impact of climate change. Finally, participants will hear about the Philippine government's efforts to build the country's resilience through innovation and technology, institutional strengthening, and community empowerment.

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## 5. Target Audience

The primary audience of the forum are Local Chief Executives from cities and municipalities in the Philippines. Key national government agencies, local government Leagues, and development partners will also be invited.

## 6. Expected Outcomes

Forum outcomes may include:

- Generate greater engagement in the discourse surrounding multi-level governance and place it as a key element for SDG localization.
  - Raise awareness and understanding of foresight concepts and uses in public institutions.
  - Participants will gather insights from international practices on smart cities development for SDG implementation for possible replication and adoption by local governments
  - Gain insight into the Philippines' governmental efforts, focusing on enhancing national resilience through innovative technology, institution strengthening, and local community empowerment.
  - Learn about the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative.
  - Better understanding of the UNSDCF 2024-2028 and the critical role of local authorities in the implementation of the UNSDCF.
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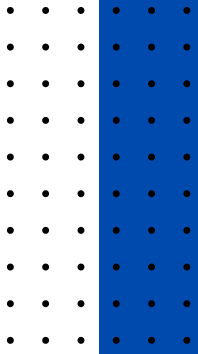
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**United Nations**

Department of  
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