

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of the Philippines

CAPITAL: Manila

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Republic

AREA: 299,679 Sq Km (115,707 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 74,448,900



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: The Philippines is an archipelago of more than 7,100 islands and islets located along the southeast rim of Asia. It is bound by the Philippines Sea to the east, the South China and Sulu Seas to the west and the Celebes Sea to the south. The country's major islands include Luzon, Mindanao, Samar, Palawan, Mindoro, Panay, Negros, Cebu, Leyte, Masbate and Bohol. Except for the two large islands of Luzon and Mindanao, the other islands are crests of submerged mountain ranges that contain over 47 volcanoes, of which around 12 are still active. The Luzon and Mindanao islands are a series of peninsulas connected together by plateaux and lowland strips while most of the rivers are short and seasonal in flow. The principal rivers are the Rio Grande de Cagayan, Agno, Abra, Bicol, Pampanga, Pasig and Agusan. Major Cities (pop. est.); Manila 1,894,700, Quezon City 1,627,900, Davao 867,800, Cebu 641,000, Caloocan 629,500, Zamboanga 453,200 (1991). Land Use; forested 46%, pastures 4%, agricultural-cultivated 31%, other 19% (1993).

CLIMATE: The Philippines has a tropical climate with a dry season from April to June and a rainy season from June to October with the hottest months being April and May. The Philippines lies within the world's severest cyclone belt and is effected by around 15 cyclones per year. Average annual precipitation in Manila is 2,080 mm (82 inches) while average temperature ranges are from 21 degrees Celsius (70 degrees Fahrenheit) to 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) all year.

PEOPLE: The Philippines has over 50 ethnic groups while the majority of Filipinos are of Malay descent and account for about 95% of the population. The remainder include ethnic minorities of Chinese and Americans.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 208 persons per sq km (539 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 42.7% urban, 57.3% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 50.2% male, 49.8% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 62.8 years male, 66.4 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 39% under 15, 29% 15 to 29, 18% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 4% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 30.0 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 7.0 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 23.0 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 40.0 per 1,000 live births (1993).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with around 84% of the population Roman Catholic while 6% are Protestant. The principal religious minorities are Muslims which account for less than 5% of the population while less than 1% are Buddhists.

LANGUAGES: The official languages are Filipino and English, with English the language of the government, commerce and media while 55% of the population speak Filipino. Some 87 languages and dialects are also spoken throughout the islands.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: incomplete primary 11.7%, primary 53.8%, secondary 18.8%, higher 15.2%, unspecified 0.5% (1980). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 25,139,700 or 88.7% (1980).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: On July 4, 1946 the Republic of the Philippines was established with Manuel Roxas as its first President. In Nov. 1965 Ferdinand Marcos was elected President and again in 1969. During the late 1960's and early 1970's there was a growing insurgence of Communist and Muslim guerrillas. In Sept. 1972 Pres. Marcos imposed Martial Law which lasted until 1981 and ruled as a virtual dictator in an attempt to crush the growing insurgence. In June 1981 Pres. Marcos was reelected and in 1983 Benigno Aquino returned from exile in the US after he had been reprieved from a death sentence that was imposed in 1972. In Aug. 1983 Aquino was shot dead at Manila Airport and his death resulted in widespread antigovernment demonstrations. In Feb. 1986 presidential elections between Marcos and Corazon Aquino, widow of Benigno, resulted in Marcos claiming victory. Corazon Aquino called on "People Power" a peaceful resistance to force Pres. Marcos from office. Marcos was subsequently forced into exile when the military backed the People Power. On Feb. 25, 1986 Aquino was inaugurated as President and in 1987 a new constitution was adopted. In Sept. 1989 former Pres. Marcos died in exile. In Dec. 1989 there was an unsuccessful coup attempt which lasted for 10 days and resulted in the deaths of over 100 people. In July 1990 Imelda Marcos was acquitted of racketeering, fraud and obstruction of justice charges by a US court. Also in the same month parts of the Philippines were devastated by an earthquake. In mid 1991 Imelda Marcos returned to the Philippines after the ban on her return was dropped. During 1991 Mt. Pinatubo on Luzon Island erupted several times killing almost 300 people and leaving over 250,000 people homeless. In June 1991 the US announced that it would be withdrawing from Clark Air Base by Sept. 16, 1992 after Mt. Pinatubo had destroyed it beyond repair while in July the US agreed to sign another 10 year lease on the Subic Naval Base, although in Sept. 1991 the Senate rejected the treaty. On Aug. 5, 1991 the military commander of a breakaway faction of the Communist guerrillas, known as the New People's Army (NPA), was arrested. In Oct. 1991 the Philippines government and Pres. Aquino reached an agreement over the Subic Naval Base with the US to withdraw within three years. On Nov. 4, 1991 Imelda Marcos returned to Manila after six years in exile to face charges of corruption and tax fraud. In Jan. 1992 the director of the American Chamber of Commerce, Michael Barnes was kidnapped by

a faction of the Communist guerrillas. On Feb. 15, 1992 the NPA ambushed government soldiers on the island of Mindanao killing 41 of them. In March 1992 a police raid on the NPA resulted in the release of Michael Barnes and the death of 14 NPA members. On June 30, 1992 Fidel V. Ramos former defense minister under Aquino was inaugurated as President following elections held on May 11, 1992. Following Pres. Ramos' inauguration he persuaded the Congress to lift a ban on the Communist Party of the Philippines and pardoned two NPA leaders after the parties reached an agreement for formal peace talks. In Aug. 1992 Mt. Pinatubo began erupting again causing a further 72 deaths through lava and mud flows. On Sept. 30, 1992 the US Navy officially handed over the Subic Naval Base to the Philippines government, which also resulted in the loss of some 40,000 local jobs. On Dec. 23, 1992 Gregorio Honasan of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement emerged from hiding to sign a peace agreement with the government. In 1993 the insurgence activities of the NPA dwindled with some 1,000 guerrillas surrendering between 1992 and mid-1993 while Pres. Ramos decreed that counter insurgence responsibilities of the Army be handed over to the National Police by 1995. On April 24, 1993 the entire leadership including 23 police generals of the National Police were dismissed for corruption. In May 1993 following electricity shortages Pres. Ramos announced plans to convert their idle nuclear power plant to nonnuclear power. In July 1993 Pres. Ramos addressed the Congress over the country's population growth rate and endorsed a family-planning program that met with opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. On Sept. 7, 1993 former Pres. Marcos' body was returned to the Philippines and later buried in northern Luzon. On Sept. 24, 1993 Imelda Marcos was convicted of two charges of corruption and sentenced to 9 to 12 years imprisonment. In Dec. 1993 the government reintroduced the death penalty.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Peso (P) divided into 100 Centavos.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$54,593,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$27,471,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$22,638,000,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$13,482,900,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$2,122,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; P - 212,086,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 26,822,000 or 39.7% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 8.9% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the USA and Japan.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Abaca, Bananas, Chrome, Coal, Coconuts, Coffee, Copper, Fish, Gold, Iron, Maize, Nickel, Pineapples, Rice, Rubber, Sugar Cane, Timber, Tobacco.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Chemicals, Fishing, Food Processing, Forestry, Mining, Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Clothing, Coconut Oils, Electronic Goods, Fruit and Vegetables, Metal Ores, Manila Hemp (Abaca), Sugar, Timber.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 1,059 km (658 mi) (1989), passenger-km 240,000,000 (149,129,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 60,000,000 (41,094,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 159,069 km (98,841 mi) (1989). Vehicles; cars 834,123 (1988), trucks and buses 121,495 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 1,420 (1990), deadweight tonnage 14,158,957 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 8,543,000,000 (5,308,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 273,511,000 (187,328,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 43 with a total circulation of 3,200,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 8,300,000 (1994). Television; receivers 7,000,000 (1994). Telephones; units 859,800 (1993).

MILITARY: 106,500 (1995) total active duty personnel with 63.8% army, 21.6% navy and 14.6% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.2% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).