FOUR

Human development at century's close

THE CLOSE of the 20th Century is a proper time for the Philippines to take stock of its current achievements in human terms. Current human achievement, after all, is the base from which future progress is to be expected.

Previous editions of the Philippine Human Development Report [1994 and 1997] have reported on the progress of provinces in terms of the human development index (HDI). The HDI is a simple tool that seeks to measure human development through a composite index. It reflects "achievements in the most basic human capabilities — leading a long life, being knowledgeable, and enjoying a decent standard of living" [UNDP 1999:127]. The *Human development report* (HDR), published globally since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ranks countries on the basis of the HDI. While the method for computing the HDI has gradually evolved over the past decade, dictated by the need for cross-country comparability and a desire to better capture the concept, its basic components have not changed. Corresponding to these components, the HDI as measured internationally includes life expectancy, literacy and the combined enrollment rate in education, and a properly adjusted measure of real per capita income (Table 4.1).

The latest issue of the HDR [UNDP 1999] shows the Philippines ranking 77th among 174 countries, with an HDI of 0.740 (using a new methodology). This places the Philippines in a category of countries with *medium* human development. Past analyses of the country's performance suggest that the Philippines appears to fare best in the knowledge-related measures. The country's performance in components such as adult literacy and enrollment ratios exceeds the average for medium-HDI countries by much more than in life expectancy and income. Its life expectancy and income are better by only 2.5 percent and 6 percent of the average for medium-HDI countries (Table 4.2). However, its adult literacy and combined enrollment rates are 25 and 28 percent better than the average for countries in the same category. As a result, its HDI comes closer to those of countries with even higher levels of income, such as Thailand or Malaysia. Comforting as this sounds, however, it should not be oversold. It is not as if the Philippines had traded off income for higher levels of knowledge. As the earlier chapters of

TABLE 4.1
Components of the Human Development Index

Achievement	Measure
Long and healthy life	Life expectancy
Knowledge	Simple literacy Combined enrollment ratios
Decent standard of living	Adjusted real per capita income

this report have pointed out, this apparent superiority needs to be discounted once the issue of quality of Philippine education is taken into account.

Notwithstanding such qualifications, however, significant Philippine achievement in human development over the last two decades of this century cannot be denied, especially given the challenges the country has had to face. The rate of improvement in human development, as measured by the HDI, has steadily improved since 1975. Although it slowed significantly during the years of economic and political turmoil between 1980 and 1990, it is significant that it did not fall, notwithstanding the drastic decline in real incomes (Figure 4.1), testimony to the Aquino and Ramos governments' commitment to sustaining a minimum level of human priority spending even in the midst of crises. Since then the rate of improvement has been respectable. The Philippines also turns in a creditable record with respect to the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), a measure that adjusts the HDI for gender inequality. The country's 1997 GDI-rank is three notches higher than its HDI rank, indicating that the Philippine women are in a better position than other countries with a similar value of HDI. This was also confirmed on an inter-provincial basis by the 1997 edition of the *Philippine human development report*.

Aside from analyzing the trend of human development for the Philippines in comparison with other countries, a continuing contribution and concern of the *Philippine human development reports* (PHDR) has been to generate human development indicators for the local level. The objective of the effort is not merely to provide useful data for researchers but frankly to generate awareness, constructive critique and claims from the people, and ultimately a response from their political representatives and agents. For this reason, it is important that the data generated should be disaggregated to a level where people can hold their leaders and themselves accountable.

TABLE 4.2
Philippine HDI in International Comparison (1997)

	Life expectancy (years)	Adult literacy (percent)	Enrollment (percent)	GDP per capita (PPP$)	HDI
Philippines	68.3	94.6	82	3520	0.740
Thailand	68.8	94.7	59	6690	0.753
Malaysia	72.0	85.7	65	8140	0.768
Medium-HDI countries	66.6	75.9	64	3327	0.662
Philippine score as proportion of medium HDI score	1.025	1.246	1.281	1.058	1.118

UNDP [1999] *Human development report*.

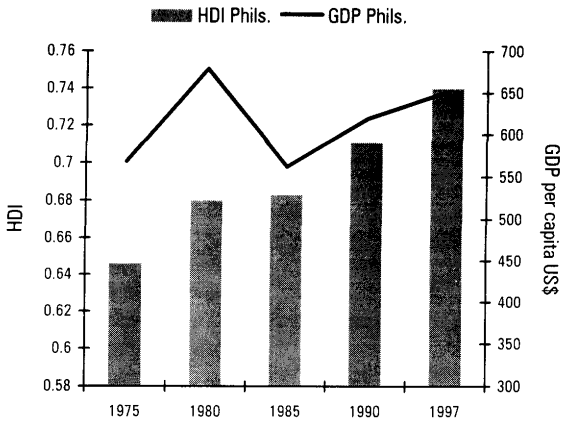
In the rest of this chapter, trends in each of the components of the human development index are analyzed at the level of provinces, and progress in the summary HDI measure over a given period covered is assessed.

A long and healthy life

There has been a steady increase of life expectancy across provinces. The estimated life expectancy for the country as a whole in 1997 was 67.21 years, a gain of more than two years over the figure 65.16 years for 1994. It is encouraging that no province shows a decline in life expectancy over the period.

Notwithstanding the steady progress in life expectancy, however, the presence of great provincial disparities is still evident (Table 4.3). Pampanga was the province with the highest life expectancy (71 years). A gap of almost twenty

FIGURE 4.1
HDI and GDP Per Capita Through Time:
Philippines (1975-1997)



Source: UNDP [1999] *Human development report*

years separates it from Tawi-Tawi, where people may expect to live only 52 years on average. Even Pampanga's high life expectancy, however, is far below any of those of countries regarded as having high human development, where in 1997 people could on average expect to live 77 years [UNDP 1999]. Life expectancy of 71 years is roughly comparable with that of Mexico, Hungary, or Bulgaria. Tawi-Tawi's level, on the other hand, matches that of Kenya (52 years) or Namibia (52.4 years). It is striking how once more the four provinces of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM plus Basilan) together continue to be plagued by the lowest life expectancy in the country. On the other hand, except for Cebu province, the top performers are all in the Luzon island group.

Provinces with high levels of functional lit-

TABLE 4.3
Top and Bottom: Life Expectancy
(in years, 1997)

Top ten	Years	Bottom ten	Years
Pampanga	71.0	Mt. Province	61.7
Cebu	70.5	Eastern Samar	61.6
Batangas	70.1	Basilan	61.4
Bulacan	69.8	Agusan del Sur	61.1
Rizal	69.3	Western Samar	60.9
Cavite	69.1	Ifugao	60.9
Nueva Ecija	69.0	Lanao del Sur	57.1
La Union	68.9	Maguindanao	55.8
Ilocos Norte	68.9	Sulu	52.9
Camarines Sur	68.7	Tawi-Tawi	51.9

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

TABLE 4.4
Some Determinants of Life Expectancy*
(dependent and independent variables in logarithms, 1997)

Variable	Coefficient
Constant	2.49054
Functional literacy (1994)**	0.18656
Basic education enrollment rate (1997)*	0.10721
Real income per capita (1997)*	0.04115
Adjusted R-squared	0.50496
N including Metro Manila	78

*cross section; ordinary least-squares estimates by HDN
**significant at one-percent level;
*significant at five-percent level
Data source: National Statistical Coordination Board

eracy, high enrollment in basic education, and high average incomes also tend to display high life expectancy. Indeed these factors can explain up to half of the variation in life expectancy (Table 4.4). The reasons for this relationship are straightforward: high levels of knowledge among the people lead to better health practices and health knowledge. Real incomes per capita, on the other hand, may be regarded as a proxy for access to and availability of health services, since provinces with higher incomes tend to earn greater government revenues and provide better social services, including public health services, infrastructure, and presence of health professionals; similarly, higher incomes allow people access to privately provided health care. The 1994 PHDR also suggests a virtuous cycle may exist, in which local governments in provinces with high levels of human development also tend to spend a larger proportion of their revenues on human priorities.

Knowledge

It has already been noted that the Philippines as a whole performs above the average on components of the HDI dealing with education. Literacy and school-enrollment ratios, especially the latter, are markedly higher than in some countries that are clearly more affluent. This report presents two measures of knowledge at the provincial level: the *basic enrollment ratio* and *functional literacy*. The functional literacy statistic unfortunately could not be updated pending the next Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), and it is therefore still based on 1994 survey results. The basic enrollment ratio, meanwhile, is the proportion of children aged 7-16 years, who are currently enrolled.

These measures of knowledge are more stringent than those used in computing the global HDI, which uses only simple literacy (ability to read and write a simple message) rather than functional literacy, and the combined enrollment ratio for elementary, high school, and university levels rather than only the basic enrollment ratio. As for the first difference, clearly the relevant concept is *functional* and not simple literacy. Probably the only reason the global HDR uses simple literacy is the absence of comparable data for functional literacy across countries. There are also good reasons for excluding university enrollment in presenting provincial statistics. Unlike elementary and high school pupils, college students are more mobile (gravitating to provinces with university towns, e.g., Mountain Province). A good number of them may be transient and not native to the province, so that it would be less valid to attribute their numbers to development efforts of the local population and local government.

TABLE 4.5
Top and Bottom: Enrollment Ratios
(in percent, 1997)

Top	percent	Bottom	percent
Mt. Province	99.10	Guimaras	73.27
Batangas	93.83	Agusan del Sur	73.27
Abra	93.39	South Cotabato	72.02
Laguna	93.03	Davao Oriental	70.40
Bulacan	92.22	Lanao del Norte	69.57
Benguet	90.90	Basilan	69.45
Bataan	90.71	Tawi-Tawi	67.53
Eastern Samar	90.68	Bukidnon	67.31
Pangasinan	90.58	Sarangani	63.85
Ilocos Sur	90.32	Maguindanao	51.70
Zambales	89.97	Sulu	43.48

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

Second, there is the issue of education quality, which is the issue of this report. The variation in quality among universities and colleges is probably much greater than in elementary and high school, so that including college enrollment would introduce more error and overstatement in the measure of education. In any event, the very thrust of the human development approach should dictate that first attention should be focused on basic education, which is the more relevant goal for the great majority of the people.

The enrollment rate for basic education, that is, the proportion of the elementary- and high school-age population (7-16 years) actually enrolled in elementary or high school, was 83 percent. This was an improvement over the basic enrollment rate of 76 percent in 1994. The province with the highest enrollment rate in 1997 was Mountain Province, with an almost universal (99 percent) enrollment rate, also indicating its status as an education center. Other provinces with enrollment rates of some 90 percent or more included Batangas, Abra, Laguna, Bulacan, Benguet, Bataan, Eastern Samar, Pangasinan, Ilocos Sur, and Zambales (Table 4.5).

At the bottom of the list was Sulu, where only 43 out of every hundred school-age children were actually enrolled. This was a further drop from an already low level of 49.8 percent in 1994 and should be a cause for serious concern. A fact that stands out once more is that, except for Guimaras, all provinces at the bottom of the list are in Mindanao. Moreover, all provinces of Muslim Mindanao provinces except for Lanao del Sur are on the list. Two factors, which have already been discussed at length in Chapter 1, need to be noted here. First is the question of access, that is, whether national and local governments are spending sufficiently and in the right directions to make education available to the local population. A second issue is whether the content of the curriculum is so designed that it is found sufficiently relevant and useful by families to continue sending their children to school. The second factor is especially important in areas with large cultural communities — such as Muslim Mindanao — whose traditions and aspirations are only poorly reflected, if at all, in the standard curriculum delivered by the state education system.

Unlike life expectancy, where constant progress is noted, some provinces registered significant declines in basic enrollment ratios between 1994 and 1997 (Table 4.6). A precipitous drop of almost 13 percentage points was seen in Aklan, followed by a drop of more than 6 percentage points in Sulu. It should be a cause

TABLE 4.6
Provinces with Reduced Enrollment Ratios

Province	1997	1994	Difference
Aklan	74.25	86.96	-12.72
Sulu	43.48	49.88	-6.40
Camiguin	73.76	79.97	-6.21
Guimaras	73.27	79.25	-5.98
Maguindanao	51.70	54.37	-2.67
Siquijor	77.36	79.81	-2.45
Batanes	84.70	86.18	-1.49
Misamis Occ.	73.84	75.31	-1.48
Cavite	87.81	88.95	-1.14
Sarangani	63.85	64.66	-0.81
Misamis Oriental	76.02	76.30	-0.28
Ilocos Norte	85.19	85.36	-0.17

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

for concern that the list includes some of the worst performers. Nonetheless, not even relatively affluent areas were spared: Cavite also suffered a drop in enrollment rate, albeit smaller. The reasons for such drops in enrollment ratios have not been fully investigated. Data across provinces, however, suggests that income may have a significant influence on enrollment ratios.

Provinces with higher per capita incomes are on average also likely to have higher enrollment ratios (Table 4.7); other studies (e.g., Lim [1998] have also shown that at the national level, changes in real GDP per capita through time do affect enrollment. It has already been noted (Chapter 3) that household expenditures on schooling are significant, even for families sending their children to public schools. It stands to reason, therefore, that as incomes fall, enrollment suffers, since parents will withdraw their children from school as school budgets are sacrificed for more urgent priorities such as food and some children are mobilized as auxiliary workers to augment family incomes.

TABLE 4.7
Enrollment Ratio and Real Income Per Capita[a]
(both dependent and independent variables in logarithms, 1997)

Variable	Coefficient
Constant	2.043599
Real income per capita (1997)**	0.244220
R-squared	0.322394
N including Metro Manila	78

[a]cross section; ordinary least-squares estimates by HDN
**significant at one-percent level
Data source: National Statistical Coordination Board

Real incomes

This brings the discussion to the third component of the HDI, which is income. Like enrollment ratios and unlike functional literacy and life expectancy, real incomes per capita can reflect short-run fluctuations. It is startling nonetheless that per capita incomes for some provinces were lower in 1997 than they were in 1994 (Table 4.8). It is most likely that some of the decline was due to the effects of the Asian crisis and the drought, both of whose effects began to be felt in 1997 and worsened in 1998.

Provinces with the highest and lowest per capita incomes based on the *Family income and expenditure survey* are shown in Table 4.9. Outside of the National Capital Region, which possessed the highest real income per head of

TABLE 4.8
Provinces with Negative or Zero Changes in Real Per Capita Incomes
(in percent, 1994 and 1997)

Province	Percent Decline
Lanao del Sur	-18.02
Cagayan	-14.61
Eastern Samar	-11.98
Sarangani	-8.67
Surigao del Sur	-6.77
Marinduque	-4.99
Occidental Mindoro	-4.72
Leyte	-3.36
Sulu	-2.45
Negros Occidental	0.53

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board, *Family income and expenditure surveys* 1997, 1994

P48,490, the top three provinces were Batanes, Bataan, and Cavite, while the lowest incomes were found in Sulu, Lanao del Sur, and Lanao del Norte. Sulu's income per head was only 17 percent of Metro Manila's and 26 percent that of Batanes. It is a measure of the geographical disparity in incomes that only nine provinces had incomes higher than the national average.

The high incomes of some provinces in the Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon area are hardly surprising, given their level of economic sophistication. The advantage Bataan possesses, no doubt, is due to its relatively smaller population, compared to some of the more mature provinces that have become the focus of immigration. The high income of Batanes may seem surprising, given its isolation and the low impact that modernization has had on it. It should be remembered, of course, that income in a situation where accessibility restricts available choices will probably be overstated in what it truly affords. Batanes also suffers from a life expectancy that is below the national average, no doubt also partly due to its inaccessibility. Deeper study is required, however, to explain the types of economic activities that have permitted Batanes to obtain such an income advantage.

TABLE 4.9
Top and Bottom: Annual Real Incomes Per Capita
(in 1994 pesos)

Top	Income	Bottom*	Income
Batanes	31626	Maguindanao	10841
Bataan	31095	Davao Oriental	10764
Cavite	29269	Agusan del Norte	10540
Rizal	26234	Tawi-Tawi	10318
Bulacan	26141	Masbate	9893
Laguna	25243	Eastern Samar	9821
Batangas	23546	Siquijor	9661
Pampanga	22716	Lanao del Norte	9637
Ilocos Norte	22497	Lanao del Sur	9497
Benguet*	20788	Sulu	8181

*Below national average income
Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

HDI levels

The treatment of income is the aspect of HDI computation where methodology has been most subject to revision. Life expectancy, literacy, and enrollment all have natural minimum and maximal limits, which serve as the natural yardsticks for a country's or province's achievement. The same is not true for income, where no natural limit exists.

The current volume reports HDIs using a methodology (more closely described in a technical appendix) that was already applied in the previous PHDR (1997). The manner of treating income in particular is sensitive to gaps in income between the richest region in the Philippines (Metro Manila) and the rest of the country. The data were supplied and the results using this method were generated by the government's own National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB), in the first quasi-official effort of this kind. The basic data are provided in the appendices to this report. The differences between the method of computing the HDI applied here and the global HDI are set out in Table 4.10.

Applying this method yields the league table in Statistical Annex 1, which ranks provinces according to the human development in-

TABLE 4.10
Indicators Used in HDI Computation

	Longevity	Literacy	Combined Enrollment rate	Income per capita
Global HDI	Life expectancy	Simple Literacy	Elementary, secondary, and tertiary	GDP per capita in purchasing power parity US$
maximum	85 years	100 percent	100 percent	40,000
minimum	25 years	0 percent	0 percent	100
This Report	Life expectancy	Functional literacy	Elementary and Secondary	Real income per capita in 1994 prices
maximum	85 years	100 percent	100 percent	highest income in 1997
minimum	25 years	0 percent	0 percent	lowest income in 1997

dex (HDI). It is to be noted immediately that the NCR region stands out as the only place with an HDI of 0.8. Only four provinces of 77 have HDIs close to 0.7 or better. Thirteen provinces have HDIs of less than 0.5,while the majority are in between.

The ten provinces with the highest levels of HDI for 1997 were Bataan, Cavite, Batanes, Bulacan, Rizal, Batangas, Laguna, Pampanga, Ilocos Norte, and Benguet. Their HDI levels ranged from 0.72 for Bataan to 0.62 for Benguet (Table 4.11). Bataan, which ranked only eighth in 1994, dislodged Cavite from the top spot. Benguet and Ilocos Norte, which were not in the top ten in 1994, joined the group, replacing Nueva Ecija and La Union.

Since 1994, Sulu has not moved from the bottom of the list. As expected, the provinces of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM plus Basilan) are all among the bottom ten. Ifugao and Masbate are the only Luzon provinces, while Northern Samar is the only Visayas province. Lanao del Norte, formerly twelfth, has dropped further and joined the list, while Western Samar has moved out.

It can never be emphasized enough that the HDI rankings of provinces may differ quite markedly from a ranking based on income alone. For example, Ifugao has a higher recorded per capita income of P14,352 than Mountain Province with P13,953. Yet Ifugao has a lower HDI, since life expectancy, enrollment rates, and functional literacy are lower than for Mt. Province. These other aspects, therefore, outweigh

TABLE 4.11
Top and Bottom: Ten Provinces in HDI, 1997

1994 Rank[a]	Top provinces	HDI 1997	1994 Rank[b]	Bottom provinces	HDI 1997
8	Bataan	0.723	7	Masbate	0.487
1	Cavite	0.721	9	Northern Samar	0.482
3	Batanes	0.709	8	Agusan del Sur	0.478
4	Bulacan	0.700	12	Lanao del Norte	0.465
3	Rizal	0.690	3	Ifugao	0.448
6	Batangas	0.681	5	Basilan	0.434
5	Laguna	0.672	6	Lanao del Sur	0.408
7	Pampanga	0.646	4	Maguindanao	0.403
12	Ilocos Norte	0.644	2	Tawi-Tawi	0.425
11	Benguet	0.624	1	Sulu	0.331

[a]number of places from the top, e.g., 1 = top

[b]number of places from the bottom, e.g., 1 = last

BOX 8

Percentage gap changes

The percentage improvement in HDI is a commonly used measure of achievement and has the advantage of being easily understood. The percentage change is given by the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage improvement} = \frac{HDI_t - HDI_{t-1}}{HDI_{t-1}}.$$

It has been argued, however, that this formula favors those with low HDI and penalizes those with high HDI levels, since the same percentage improvement is more difficult to achieve when the base is large, e.g., when life expectancy, or literacy, enrollment, or incomes approach the maximum. To give an example from school, raising a score of 90 by ten percent means getting an additional nine answers correct; raising a score of 40 by ten percent means getting only an additional four answers right. For this reason, it has been proposed that the base on which a given change should be compared should not be the original score but the gap between the score and the ideal score. The adequacy of one's effort should be measured based on how far one still has to go. Since the HDI (and its components individually) are numbers between zero and one, the proper measure, it is proposed, should be the gap between the perfect HDI of one and the actual HDI, i.e., $1 - HDI_{t-1}$. Hence this alternative measure of improvement is:

$$\text{Gap improvement} = \frac{HDI_t - HDI_{t-1}}{1 - HDI_{t-1}}.$$

Applying this to the data for 1994 and 1997 yields the following list of provinces with the best improvements (percent in parentheses): Ifugao (12.9); Bataan (12.5); Antique (12.3); Sorsogon (12.3); Abra (12.1); Romblon (11.8); Capiz (10.2); Zamboanga del Norte (9.6); Palawan (9.1); NCR (1.4).

ince. These other aspects, therefore, outweigh simple income per head.

Changes in HDI

While levels of HDI indicate the current human development status of a province, changes in these levels suggest the potential for improvement, as well as measuring effort. Using simple percentage changes in the levels of HDI between 1994 and 1997, the largest changes are shown on Table 4.12. It is encouraging that three of the provinces which showed the largest proportional increases in HDI were among the bottom ten, thus showing that low current levels need not be a hindrance to improvement. On the other hand, already-poor provinces such as Lanao del Sur, Sulu, and Sarangani were also among those where deterioration in HDI was observed. All in all, 44 provinces showed higher HDIs between 1994 and 1997, while 31 showed a deterioration. In some respects, indeed, a low base makes it easier to effect changes. In the limit, a province with 98 percent functional literacy may encounter more difficulty in further improving performance, than one where literacy is low. Partly for this reason, other means of computing improvements have been proposed [Box 8].

The deterioration in HDI in many cases occurred in the income component of HDI. In some cases, this was due to an actual decline in real per capita incomes between the two years, such as in Sarangani. In others, the deteriora-

TABLE 4.12
Top and Bottom: Percent Changes in HDI

Province	Percent
Tawi-Tawi	13.12
Ifugao	12.88
Bataan	12.50
Sorsogon	12.31
Antique	12.26
Abra	12.08
Romblon	11.18
Capiz	10.15
Zamboanga del Norte	9.63
Palawan	9.14

Source: See statistical annexes

tion was not an actual decline in income but an increase in the gap between the province's income and that of the richest region, NCR. This was true, for example, for Cavite, whose growth in income was positive but not large enough to make it rise in the income ranks. (By comparison, NCR's per capita income increased by almost ten percent annually over the period.) In still others, as in the case of Leyte, there was deterioration or stagnation in both incomes and schooling. In analyzing these changes, changes in income affecting high-HDI provinces should be a cause for less concern than those affecting areas with low HDI. A true cause for concern in high-HDI provinces should arise in cases where health and knowledge indicators deteriorate significantly.

Going by this rule, priority attention should be given to low-HDI provinces, those with HDIs of less than 0.5 which show deterioration or stagnation. Examples of these are Sulu, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, and Sarangani. Attention should also be devoted to cases in which enrollment ratios decline.

What if provinces were countries? International comparisons

The 1999 *Human development report* published by UNDP proposes a new method for the computation of HDI that, while less direct, avoids several complications arising from other methods. The main difference arises from the treatment of the real income per capita variable. Per capita income under the new method is gradually *discounted* by taking its logarithm all throughout (see Technical Note). This means effectively that further increases in income are less and less important at increasingly higher levels of income, in keeping with the concept of human development that emphasizes the goal of achieving decent and adequate living standards, rather than the pursuit of unlimited opulence.

For this purpose, a maximum desirable level of per capita income equal to US$40,000 annually and a minimum of US$100 (in purchasing-power parity terms) are posited, and countries' incomes are compared to this scale.

The levels of HDI presented and analyzed thus far are not strictly comparable to international league tables, owing to the difference in the treatment of income. The intraprovincial HDIs are scaled to the income of the richest region, rather than an absolute standard; income is also not discounted. The rationale for this has been that for provinces, the more realistic standard would be a level of income that some locality has actually attained, rather than an absolute; and secondly that the maximum per capita income used (Metro Manila's) was itself quite low by international standards.

To allow comparisons between provinces and other countries, however, this report has converted provincial incomes to make them roughly comparable with the figures that were used in the global *Human development report 1999* and generated a second series of provincial HDIs. The effect of doing this is seen in the league tables in the statistical appendix under the headings Income Index-II and HDI-II. (The computation of the two other components of HDI remains the same.)

The result of doing so is, first of all, to reduce the HDI of the National Capital Region from the previous 0.885 to 0.781. This is not surprising, since the income scale is now no longer based on NCR's but on a higher international standard, where even Manila's income looks modest. All the other provinces' HDIs moreover are pushed up in varying degrees,

TABLE 4.13
Provincial HDI in International Perspective
(all figures for 1997)

Locality/Country	HDI
Korea, Rep. of	0.852
Costa Rica	0.801
Mexico	0.786
NCR	0.786
Malaysia	0.768
Cavite	0.757
Thailand	0.753
Bulacan	0.750
Batangas	0.749
Rizal	0.743
Kazakhstan	0.740
Bataan	0.741
Brazil	0.739
Laguna	0.731
Turkey	0.728
Batanes	0.728
Uzbekistan	0.720
Nueva Ecija	0.719
Pampanga	0.718
Ilocos Norte	0.717
Maldives	0.716
La Union	0.716
Pangasinan	0.713
Benguet	0.705
Isabela	0.702
China	0.701
Tarlac	0.700
Albania	0.699
Ilocos Sur	0.699
Oriental Mindoro	0.697
Tunisia	0.695
Zambales	0.695
Marinduque	0.693
Quezon	0.692
Iloilo	0.692
Abra	0.691

Locality/Country	HDI
Camarines Sur	0.689
Albay	0.683
Indonesia	0.681
Aurora	0.680
Cebu	0.679
Cagayan	0.676
Catanduanes	0.673
Nueva Vizcaya	0.673
Sorsogon	0.671
Guimaras	0.668
Bohol	0.667
Southern Leyte	0.667
Tajikistan	0.665
Vietnam	0.664
Misamis Oriental	0.664
Camarines Norte	0.664
Syria	0.663
Occidental Mindoro	0.661
Romblon	0.661
Negros Occidental	0.661
Surigao del Sur	0.660
Quirino	0.659
Mt. Province	0.659
Capiz	0.658
Aklan	0.657
Antique	0.654
Bolivia	0.652
Surigao del Norte	0.652
Misamis Occidental	0.652
Biliran	0.650
Camiguin	0.650
Bukidnon	0.650
Leyte	0.648
Davao (del Norte)	0.646
Swaziland	0.644
Siquijor	0.644
Zamboanga del Sur	0.644

Locality/Country	HDI
Palawan	0.644
Eastern Samar	0.643
Agusan del Norte	0.641
Namibia	0.638
South Cotabato	0.638
Davao del Sur	0.637
North Cotabato	0.636
Negros Oriental	0.634
Apayao	0.632
Kalinga	0.628
Vanuatu	0.627
Sultan Kudarat	0.625
Zamboanga del Norte	0.625
Davao Oriental	0.624
Solomon Islands	0.623
Masbate	0.623
Mongolia	0.618
Sarangani	0.618
Samar (Western)	0.613
Northern Samar	0.608
Gabon	0.607
Agusan del Sur	0.601
Lanao del Norte	0.597
Myanmar	0.580
Ifugao	0.565
Zimbabwe	0.560
Basilan	0.556
Congo	0.533
Maguindanao	0.532
Tawi-Tawi	0.522
Lao PDR	0.491
Sulu	0.491
Nigeria	0.456
Lanao del Sur	0.456
Bangladesh	0.440
Zambia	0.431

Source of HDI for countries:
Human development report 1999

those with high incomes moving up much less than those with low incomes. Hence, for example, Ifugao's HDI increases by 0.117, while that of Batangas increases by only 0.063. Table 4.13 intersperses the highest- and lowest-performing provinces under this methodology with the HDIs of some countries for 1997.

On this absolute scale, there is no province or region in the country that may be regarded as having high human development (HDI 0.8 or greater). On the other hand, two provinces, Lanao del Sur and Sulu, fall in the category of low human development. All others are in the medium category.

It is eye-opening that in an international perspective, the provinces with the lowest HDI are comparable in state to a number of poor African countries, Cambodia, and Myanmar. The highest provincial HDI under this measure, Cavite's, is less than Thailand's. Metro Manila's HDI, the highest for the country, is somewhat lower than Mexico's, better than Malaysia's or Thailand's, but inferior to Costa Rica's or South Korea's, not to mention Hong Kong (0.880) or Singapore (0.888).

An international perspective has the advantage of putting in context the amount of effort that must still be done by national and local governments. Human development indicators, however they are computed, do nothing more than inform the people and their leaders about what is wrong and what is possible. Ultimately their value is redeemed only when people — seeing the gap between what is and what could be — begin to demand more of themselves and of those who purport to represent their interests. Then apathy is broken, and what is generated instead is concern, unease, perhaps even discontent, and a desire to take a hand that is the indispensable first step towards real change. ◗