

# Philippine unemployment rising despite strong growth

Jobless rate in the Philippines touches 7.1 per cent in third quarter

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Manila: Philippines' strong economic growth of 7.5 per cent has not solved the country's unemployment rate which rose to 7.1 per cent in the third quarter of this year, from 6.9 per cent for the same period last year, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said.

The NSO's third quarter report said the country's under-employment rate of workers with less than 40 hours of work a week, rose to 19.6 per cent in October, compared with 19.4 per cent for the same period last year. Underemployment rate was 17.9 per cent in July, the second quarter.

## Workforce

Only 39.3 million Filipinos belong to the workforce, even though 61.2 million are aged between 15 years and above, NSO said.

A shortfall of 21.9 million represents the true number of the country's unemployment rate among the younger generation and those who are not looking for work.

This is one reason why 30 per cent of the country's 90 million population live below the poverty line or on less than one US dollar a day, analysts added. The NSO did not say how many of the country's unemployed would become overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

At the same time, one of three Filipino workers, or 33 per cent, is unskilled, said the NSO, prompting analysts to say that many unskilled workers often worked as domestic helpers abroad.

To solve the country's pernicious employment problem, annual growth rate of the country's domestic gross product (GDP) should be nine to 10 per cent, the foreign chambers of commerce assessed.