

**CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

The Philippines is a middle-income nation of 101 million people with a GDP per capita (PPP) of US\$8,200 in 2017. In the last 20 years, around 60,000 people have lost their lives in this country to the combined effects of different natural disasters.

The 7,000 islands are located at latitudes 5–20°N of the equator – within the tropical cyclone (typhoon) belt (Figure 2.26). They are hit by around 20 major storms each year. Some of the islands are isolated, making it harder to warn people living there of approaching storms. In 2011, a combination of coastal and river flooding, driven by Typhoon Washi, washed away slum housing on the banks and sandbars of the Cagayan river, killing 1,250 people. On the island of Mindanao, half a million people lost their homes. In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan – the strongest storm ever recorded making landfall in the Philippines – killed 6,300 people (Figure 2.27). Some scientists think there is a correlation between the increasing intensity of storms striking the Philippines and the progression of climate change.

The human and economic impacts of storms can be severe and are rising over time because of:

- the vulnerability of poorer segments of the country's increasing population (many people live at sea level in poorly constructed homes; total population grew by 45 per cent between 1990 and 2008)

- failure of the authorities to have better management policies, such as land-use zoning, despite the known risks
- the growing value of property and business assets (Manila is a megacity of more than 20 million people where economic risks are very high: it is now a major call centre hub, for instance).



**Figure 2.26** A major tropical storm (typhoon) passing over the Philippines



**Figure 2.27** The impact of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines