



# PHILIPPINES

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## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR PEACE AND PROGRESS

by

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at the

### **General Debate**

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**Mr. President,**

Allow me to warmly congratulate you on your well-deserved election as the head of this 64th session of the UN General Assembly. Please count on the full cooperation of the Philippines as you discharge the duties of your high office.

We are gathered here today, in this parliament of the nations, to find meaningful solutions to conflict and crisis confronting our world today. Though there are signs of global recovery, now is neither the time for complacency nor for a return to business as usual. Our drive for enhancing global development has clearly slowed, while the challenges to peace remain starkly before us.

Through globalization, we have witnessed unprecedented material progress and record poverty alleviation. Yet the poorest 40 percent of the world population still live on less than \$2 a day. Nor have we resolved the climate change and food crises that oppress hundreds of millions of human beings.

Much of global development has been the fruits of labor, including the labor of migrant workers. Yet despite their contributions to the global economy, too many migrants remain exposed to exploitation and abused.

Moreover, the peace dividend from the end of the Cold War never materialized, even as we continue to confront nuclear proliferation and violent conflict. The shortage of aid resources, and faltering trade and investment, are generating a global development emergency. Many nations will not attain the MDGs on target. Development gains are being tragically lost.

Our march of progress must not stall. Not on our watch. Not while we have the will, the vision and the means to build a better world, inspired by a shared commitment to justice, equity, non-discrimination, progress and peace.

And we should do so by focusing on five great challenges of our time:

First: Promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation;

Second: Managing the global crisis to encourage equitable recovery, fairer globalization and faster poverty alleviation;

Third: Protecting and promoting the rights of migrants who continue to contribute to global development and the well-being of our societies;

Fourth: Taking urgent measures to effectively address the adverse effects of climate change without further delay; and

Fifth: Reducing conflict and deepening mutual understanding and respect through greater interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue.

### **DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION**

**Mr. President,**

Nuclear weapons and their technology are a threat to international peace and security, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is our central mechanism to contain and eventually eliminate this threat. The May 2010 NPT Review Conference, over which the Philippines will preside, provides the next opportunity for all of us to act on this in a concerted manner.

We can be encouraged by certain recent development on this front. We have had the constructive atmosphere of the preparatory committee meetings to the Review Conference.

President Obama has announced that he will lead the US to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), another key pillar of the global disarmament and NPT system.

In addition, the United States and Russia are making headway under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) to reduce their deployed nuclear warheads and delivery systems beyond its pending expiry this December.

The South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) other regional nuclear free zones continue to reinforce the NPT system as well.

These positive developments inspire the Philippines, in steering the review conference, to conduct negotiations and consultations in an open and transparent manner.

In this spirit, we reiterate our call for the few remaining countries that have not yet done so to accede to both the CTBT and the NPT in order to give greater hope for lasting peace and security for our world.

### **GLOBAL CRISIS, RECOVERY AND A NEW GLOBALIZATION**

**Mr. President,**

The global financial and economic crisis is placing intolerable strain on the poorest of the poor undermining years of effort to attain internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and to combat ill-health and hunger.

The crisis has been accompanied by increases in unemployment, with concomitant declining incomes and demand. The ILO estimates that unemployment could rise by 50 million during 2009, taking the global unemployment rate to above 7 per cent.

The Philippines and many other nations are implementing stimulus packages, accelerated employment generation programs and enhanced social safety nets. In the Philippines we strengthened our banking sector and fiscal position through tough reforms, which blunted the full force of the global crisis. The Philippines is one of the few economies that continue to have positive GDP growth.

However, we cannot ignore the impact of the global crisis elsewhere in our interdependent world. The Philippines thus joins other nations in this General Assembly in calling for a united effort in the United Nations to act for the common good of all our peoples.

The UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held in this very hall last June, presented UN Member States with lines of action that we must take now to stimulate the global economy, improve regulation and monitoring, and reform processes and institutions to prevent any recurrence of this crisis.

We see the Global Jobs Pact that the International Labor Organization (ILO) put forward, and which was endorsed by the ECOSOC last July, as another important step to recover from this crisis.

We reiterate our call on all countries to resist protectionism, in order to expand trade and investment flows, and on developed nations to maintain their ODA commitments.

Furthermore, the voice of the developing world must now be fully heard in reforming international financial and development institutions so that we can forge a more equitable and stable global economic system to avoid future crises.

## **MIGRANT WORKERS AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

**Mr. President,**

Global migrants are among the groups most adversely affected by the crisis. The international community, therefore, has a shared responsibility, to ensure their protection, taking into full account the special vulnerabilities of

the gender and family dimensions of the issue.

The Second Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which the Philippines was privileged to chair, reinforced this important message by focusing on the human face of migration, and on the human rights and empowerment of migrants.

In this regard, we also urge all nations to accede to the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and to avoid unfair restrictions and treatment of migrants. [Only in this manner can we protect them from the crisis and ensure that they can continue their positive contributions to the global economy.]

### **MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Mr. President,**

We must carry the momentum of the Summit on Climate Change here in New York forward into the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the road to Copenhagen this December. The world expects nothing less from us.

The Philippines, therefore, calls on the concerned developed countries to present their firm post-Kyoto greenhouse gas emission targets, taking into account the ideal levels suggested by the scientific community. They must also assist developing countries mitigate and adapt to worsening climate change by fulfilling their UNFCCC obligations to provide technological and financial support. As a coordinator of the G-77 in the talks, the Philippines will continue to work with all parties to help ensure a positive outcome in Copenhagen.

The Philippines is doing its part to advance this vital global agenda. We have recently enacted a landmark law promoting the development and use of renewable energy resources, especially biofuels.

Earlier this month, the Philippines also hosted the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia. The Manila Declaration on Green Industry in Asia and Framework of Action adopted by that Conference promoted the integration of sustainable development into industrial development processes for the transition to resource-efficient and low-carbon industries. We hope that elements of the Manila Declaration will provide inputs for Copenhagen as well.



## **GREATER INTERFAITH AND INTERCIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUE**

**Mr. President,**

The international community must also focus on the urgent need to reduce tension and conflict fueled by perceived differences in religion, faith and civilization. If left unattended, such conflict can fester, causing greater tension and untold human suffering and violence, which extremists can exploit.

The urgency of this matter has prompted the Philippines and many partner nations and organizations to promote greater interfaith dialogue, within the United Nations system as well as on regional and national levels. By building bridges of understanding, this global advocacy enhances peace and development.

The Philippines has tabled annually a UN resolution calling for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, which the UN General Assembly has always adopted unanimously. We initiated in the UN the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace, composed of countries from all regions of the world.

In 2006, we also launched a global Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, headquartered in New York, made up of 54 governments, 15 UN agencies and 110 religious NGOs at the UN.

To reinforce this effort, the Philippines will host the first Special Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development in Manila this December. We are pleased to invite all UN and NAM members and other interested nations as observer to this important and seminal meeting.

## **UN PEACEKEEPING**

The spirit of multilateralism and prudent realism demands that we support UN peacekeeping efforts. In crises and emergencies around the world, we must collectively do more to alleviate suffering and to help nations and communities secure self-sustaining peace.

The Philippines will continue to be active in UN peacekeeping. Indeed, the Philippines has become one of the largest contributors of individual police officers to UN peacekeeping operations. We have more than 600 peacekeepers serving with distinction around the world. Next month, we will send a battalion in support of the UN Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights.

## **CONCLUSION**

**Mr. President,**

We stand on the cusp of history. It is in our hands, here in the United Nations, to shape these changes and trends so that we will leave to succeeding generations a lasting legacy of a world of greater justice, compassion, and well-being.

The Philippines is deeply honored to assist and cooperate with all nations in the task of building a future where peace and prosperity reign unceasingly for the benefit of all mankind.

Thank you.