



PHILIPPINES

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RULES BASED RELATIONS AT THE HEART OF OUR UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

**H.E. MR. LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

at the

**GENERAL DEBATE
66TH SESSION, UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Statement by
H.E. LIBRAN N. CABACTULAN
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
General Debate, 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
27 September 2011, New York

Mr. President:

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election and to offer the Philippines' full support for your leadership in this 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Our collective experience as one United Nations has brought to bear the reality that it is only when nations work together – in firm and determined resolve - can we begin to address the many difficulties that confront us.

A Framework for our Work

Mr. President:

Two global wars exposed our vulnerability to leaders and nations that do not hesitate to use violence to resolve disputes, and underscored the need for an international system to govern the behavior of states.

This is the rules-based framework that underpins everything we want to build, raise and do as one United Nations. This framework – built by our shared values and common aspirations - provides the way by which we can effectively move together as one global community towards our common objectives.

For the Philippines, therefore, this session's theme, "The Role of Mediation in the Settlement of Disputes by Peaceful Means," is most relevant and opportune.

Peace through an International Rules-based System

Mr. President:

A rules-based system will only work in a sustained manner if the rules themselves are created based on principles of justice and equity.

Recent events across the globe, particularly in the Middle East, have shown us that individuals rise together for what they believe is just and equitable. Individuals clamor for the rule of law based on equity and fairness. When they realize the injustice of repressive and iniquitous rule, they will not hesitate to bring effective and positive change.

Building Peace and Strengthening International Security through Disarmament

Mr. President:

We must continue our work in eliminating nuclear weapons and curtailing the illicit trade in conventional weapons and small and light arms, to preserve peace and our very existence.

The Philippines believes in the importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty for the success of our work, as the only legally binding instrument that calls for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The successful 2010 NPT Review Conference showed the collective resolve of States Parties to move further forward in ridding the world of these weapons.

We have already agreed to convene a conference by 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The holding of this conference will take us closer to our goal.

Building Peace through Equitable and Sustained Development

Mr. President:

To build peace, we need to provide and strengthen conditions that encourage the full progress and prosperity of all nations and peoples.

We must ensure that international trade and development support this end. The Philippines therefore calls for a fair, open and rules-based multilateral trading system and the conclusion of the Doha round.

We must likewise redouble our efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The target date of 2015 is upon us and much work remains to be done.

The Philippines is one of 17 mega-diverse countries and has a great stake in ensuring that global biodiversity is protected and maintained. We have been described as the “epicenter of global marine biodiversity” and hosts the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity.

As we look forward to the Rio+20 Conference next year, we join the call for a more powerful expression of the entire world’s political commitment for sustainable development

Protecting our Human Resources and Upholding Human Dignity

Mr. President:

With the human person at the core of all our efforts, we must always strive to uphold human dignity and human rights.

This holds true for migrant workers. The Philippines has close to 10 million Filipinos overseas contributing to global socio-economic development.

In line with the rules-based approach, the Philippines supports the establishment of guidelines that would ensure the welfare of all migrant workers.

Additionally, we must renew our resolve to address the evils of human trafficking.

In the Philippines, we have embarked on an intensive "all-of-government" effort to combat trafficking in persons in the areas of protection, prevention and prosecution.

The Philippines is also a founding member of the *Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking*, an informal association of UN Member States that seeks to help reinvigorate and consolidate the global fight against trafficking in persons.

At the core of this initiative is the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Aside from establishing rules to protect migrant workers and to prevent human trafficking, the global community needs to explore measures to more effectively assist developing countries in evacuating their nationals in instances of disaster or internal conflict.

The Philippines also supports efforts at the United Nations to enhance partnerships, including with private sector actors, in strengthening the international humanitarian and emergency response system.

Peace and Human Rights

Mr. President:

The Philippines recognizes that the promotion and protection of human rights is of vital importance to secure peace and socio-economic development, promote the rule of law, and strengthen democracies.

The Philippine government likewise recognizes women as agents of socio-economic growth and change and thus strongly advocates their full participation in nation building.

Mr. President:

The Philippines is pleased to announce that last August 30, we deposited our instrument of ratification for the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

This is an historic moment for my country and my people. We have stood up against the impunity of colonial rule and of a dictatorship. This time, we stand together with the rest of the world in saying “never again,” to impunity, in any corner of our world.

Firm in the desire to contribute to global efforts to safeguard the world against impunity, the Philippines has fielded a candidate for election to the Court: Professor Dr. Miriam Defensor Santiago, an experienced trial judge and international legal scholar, with a distinguished and long career in public service. We ask all our partners and friends to kindly support her candidature.

Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding

As we look to strengthen the ramparts of peace, we recognize the important role and contributions of peacekeeping and peacebuilding at the United Nations.

With around 800 men and women serving in peacekeeping missions around the world, the Philippines stands ready to do its part to ensure that the lines of peace are fortified and continuously expanded.

The Philippines lauds the heightened interaction and dialogue among the Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Security Council, troop and police contributing countries, and other key stakeholders in the global peacekeeping agenda.

Maritime Piracy

As we strive to reinforce peacekeeping operations on land, so too should we continue to exert efforts in maintaining stability and security at sea. Maritime piracy, after all, imperils lives of seafarers and disrupts global trade.

Today, around 70 Filipino seafarers are still held hostage by pirates operating in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Indian Ocean. We must continue to work strongly against these sea pirates who should have no place in our modern civilized world.

Reforms at the Security Council

Mr. President:

To strengthen an international rules-based regime, the Philippines advocates UN reforms aimed at making our Organization more resilient, relevant and responsive, particularly in the Security Council. On record, it is only the Philippines that presented specific drafts of resolutions concretely stating the proposals on the five key issues - categories of membership, question of the veto, size of the enlarged Security Council and working methods, relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council and question of regional representation.

Counter Terrorism

Terrorism continues to cast its dark shadow on us all. The decapitation of terrorist organizations has not put an end to terrorism. We need to address the root causes and conditions that transform individuals with so much passion into beasts that know nothing else but violence to achieve their ends. Among many things, we need to further examine how economic disenfranchisement, intolerance and radicalization contribute to the growth of terrorist groups.

Peace and the Rule of Law

Mr. President:

The rule of law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, is key to finding solutions to disputes on conflicting claims in the West Philippine Sea. As we prepare to commemorate the 30th anniversary of UNCLOS next year, let all States Parties remember not just our rights but also our obligations.

For the rule of law is the bedrock on which the growth and development of our community of nations is built. Adherence to the rule of law provides stability and certainty in the conduct of relations between states. In a world defined by inequality in economic, military and political resources and might, the rule of law is the great equalizer, ensuring that rights are protected and responsibilities are complied with. Adherence to the rule of law prevents conflicts. And in instances of disputes – particularly of a territorial nature – the rule of law ensures peaceful settlement and resolution.

The rule of law has guided the Philippines in all its actions as a responsible member of the international community. The Philippines realizes that only when the rule of law prevails can all stakeholders and the world benefit from a region of such strategic and resource importance.

In the meantime, we will adhere to ASEAN's 1992 Manila Declaration on the West Philippine Sea and the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the West Philippine Sea and call on other parties to do so. We also welcome the efforts and support of other stakeholders in working towards a lasting, just and peaceful solution to the conflicting claims in our region.

Mr. President:

Let me conclude by saying that underpinning the success of all our efforts in the United Nations is adherence to the rule of law and rules-based international system.

Out of the horrors of wars, we have resolved as one global community to build and strengthen the ramparts of peace and development. Those ramparts, strong as

they may be, can easily disintegrate when even just one nation behaves contrary to the rules and norms we have elected to abide by.

It is our obligation as individual nations and as a collective global community that all nations – big or small – behave responsibly through adherence to the rule of law and a rules-based regime. Only then can we hope to enjoy the benefits of our world and live together in greater peace, progress and prosperity. Thank you.