



PHILIPPINES

Statement of
His Excellency ALBERT F. DEL ROSARIO
Secretary of Foreign Affairs

68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
High Level General Debate
30 September 2013

**CONTRIBUTING TO THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:
THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIENCE**

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Philippine government, I proffer my warmest congratulations on your election. I wish you success in your work, and assure you of my country's steadfast support for your presidency.

Mr. President,

The theme that has been selected for your Presidency is indeed timely and relevant. We must start setting the stage for the new development agenda which will succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) framework. Barely two years before its deadline, we still have considerable work ahead of us. For instance, the global economic and financial crisis has underscored the need for reform towards greater systemic coherence; the multilateral trading system remains frozen in the past; and the persistence of an outdated development paradigm results in policy prescriptions and conditionalities inimical to the interests of many developing countries.

Mr. President,

As we set the stage for the Post-2015 framework, let us reaffirm the very *raison d'être* of the United Nations: which is to accord every person the opportunity at a life that is secure, progressive and dignified.

That purpose is enshrined in the Philippine Constitution, and is central to President Benigno S. Aquino III's "Social Contract with the Filipino People." Under President Aquino's leadership, my country has embarked on a journey along a straight path – or, as we say in Filipino, "*Daang Matuwid*" – resolving to work towards inclusive growth, combating corruption, promoting transparency and accountability, improving global competitiveness, making better use of resources, achieving just and lasting peace, and upholding the rule of law.

The Aquino Administration firmly maintains that "Good governance is good economics." As a result, the Philippines is reaping the first fruits of its hard work. In the last four quarters, the Philippine economy experienced unprecedented growth of over 7 percent. As a result, the Philippines won three (3) investment-grade ratings, and is now considered a "growth engine" in the region.

These glowing reports are, of course, well received by my government. We are under no illusion, however, that these indicators alone constitute success. For the past 13 years, the MDGs have been integrated in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) for 2011 to 2016. Yet, our work continues, and the challenge we now face is clear:

It is how to ensure that growth is inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIENCE: LESSONS LEARNED IN WORKING TOWARDS THE MDGs

As we pursue the path towards this very type of growth, my government is guided by the following important lessons learned from our experience in working towards the Millennium Development Goals:

First, **strong institutional arrangements are necessary**. For the Philippines, this means that the highest political support is given to the attainment of the MDGs, involving all branches of government and other key stakeholders.

Second, **specific policies, programs and projects must be aligned with national development goals**. In our MDGs experience, innovative social protection programs include Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), Universal Health Care (UHC), Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS), K-12 Basic Education Program and Community Mortgage Program (CMP).

Third, **the active participation of various stakeholders**, namely, the private sector, civil society and non-government organizations, the constituents and international development partners, **must be strongly promoted and supported**. This ensures that the policies and programs are responsive and inclusive.

Fourth, **local government units should be empowered**. Beyond the delivery of basic social services, the capacities of local government units in formulating and implementing policies and programs must be strengthened, guided by the principles of transparency and accountability.

Fifth, **the capability to generate accurate, timely and relevant data at the national and local levels must be enhanced**.

Sixth, **disaster risk reduction must be mainstreamed to enable communities to better cushion the impact of man-made and natural disasters**. Building the capacities of national and local stakeholders to help reduce the vulnerability and increase physical and economic resilience of communities must be a key development goal.

These important elements will further enrich the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2018 for the Philippines. With the overall theme, "Supporting inclusive, sustainable and resilient development," the UNDAF aims to fully align the UN work with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) for 2011 to 2016.

My government is actively participating in the international discourse on sustainable development and in crafting the post-2015 development agenda. The Philippines was one of 66 countries chosen by the UN to conduct open, inclusive and transparent consultations with a broad range of stakeholders aimed at generating perspectives on how the post-2015 development agenda framework should look. We took to this task earnestly by undertaking consultations with over 500 stakeholders representing government, civil society, the business community and the academe.

THE PHILIPPINES' PROPOSED 'BUILDING BLOCKS' FOR THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Mr. President,

Our national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda have identified the building blocks of the new framework as well as the development themes deemed most relevant to the Philippines. These building blocks are composed of four principles, five themes and various development enablers and were offered to the UN system as the Philippine contribution to the ongoing discourse.

We need look no further than the United Nations Charter to identify the building blocks for the global post-2015 development agenda. For this agenda to be relevant and responsive, it must be anchored on four main principles, namely:

1. Human Rights;
2. Equality, Equity, People Empowerment, Social Cohesion and Justice;
3. Accountable Governance; and
4. Inclusive Development

For my country, we have identified five pillars that we believe will address our own specific development challenges. These pillars represent the areas where progress is most needed to build a rights-based, equitable and sustainable society. These pillars are:

First, *poverty reduction and social inclusion*;

Second, *environment sustainability, climate change and disaster risk management*;

Third, *accountable, responsive and participatory governance*;

Fourth, *a fair and stable order based on the international rule of law*; and

Fifth, *peace and security*.

My government will formulate and implement policies that will be defined by these pillars. These policies will duly be integrated into my country's national development agenda, and the progress will be monitored at regular intervals.

On the global front, the Philippines proposes that the post-2015 development agenda have a duration of 10 years, with a major review to be undertaken by 2020. Reforms should be

frontloaded within the first half of the period, to pave the way for substantive accomplishments by 2020.

Mr. President,

Allow me to further elaborate on aspects of the principles and themes the Philippines has put forward.

The Philippines continues to aspire for a global economic system that places development at the center, and one that promotes democracy in international economic decision making. Ultimately, it behooves us to consider reform of the overall global economic system as we craft a sound sustainable development agenda.

To achieve meaningful reform, what we need now is a strong political impetus from all of us to make this happen. Governments must see beyond political differences, and agree to work together to ensure a global level playing field. It is for this reason that the Philippines staunchly supports the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals.

ADDRESSING MIGRATION: THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS

Mr. President,

The post-2015 development agenda should squarely address migration. It is a cross-cutting issue relevant to our efforts to promote human rights, reduce poverty and foster sustainable development. The Philippines, for its part, will continue to advocate the protection of the rights of migrants, regardless of migration status; the recognition of migrants' positive contribution to development in both the sending and receiving countries; and the creation of programs which support families, especially children who are left behind.

Our national experience in these issues will be my government's contribution to the discussion in the forthcoming High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development later this week. In addition, we hope to include in the discussion the plight of migrants who find themselves in conflict areas, a situation that my government has had to address in recent years.

In several instances, we repatriated Filipino workers to get them out of harm's way. Our experience has been instructive and enriching, as it opened for us new windows of cooperation with our bilateral partners as well as with the UN, International Organization for Migration and other international organizations. My government wants to focus international discussion to the plight of these migrants, with the view to forging creative platforms on which states – whether countries of origin, transit or destination – can cooperate to better address this complex issue.

The Philippines hopes that the High Level Dialogue will reaffirm that migration is an indispensable element in the global sustainable development agenda. Migration influences each country's socio-economic growth, human capital, and involvement in global affairs. Managing migration, through policies that uphold the dignity of the individual, should therefore be a vital component in the development agenda of each nation and of the world.

UPHOLDING THE RULE OF LAW: ARBITRATION AS A PEACEFUL MEANS TO SETTLE DISPUTES

Mr. President,

Achieving sustainable development requires an enabling environment of peace, security and the rule of law.

It is to this end that my government's approach in managing conflicts within and outside our borders is anchored on international law. As such, we avail ourselves of the various means for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including mediation and arbitration, in accordance with Chapter 6 of the U.N. Charter. As declared by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/10 on the "Peaceful settlement of disputes between States," otherwise known as the 1982 Manila Declaration, the "recourse to judicial settlement of legal disputes should not be considered an unfriendly act between States." On the contrary, it is a measure that would generate clarity, benefitting all stakeholders. In this spirit, my country reaffirms its unwavering support for the International Court of Justice, and the various specialized tribunals, such as the dispute settlement mechanisms of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Philippines has also relentlessly and tirelessly pursued the peace process in the Southern Philippines. The signing of Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro is a milestone in this regard. We remain steadfastly committed to achieving just and lasting peace that will be inclusive for all.

Furthermore, in accordance with the application of the rule of law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, the Philippines, as a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and a staunch advocate of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, also welcomes Syria's accession to the Treaty. The Philippines hopes that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will effectively assist the Syrian Government in disposing of its chemical weapons stockpiles.

PROMOTING PEACE: THE PHILIPPINES' STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

The Philippine government's commitment to peace is resolute. This commitment is demonstrated in our continued participation in UN's peacekeeping missions, particularly in UN Disengagement Observer Force in the occupied Golan, where, despite the dangers, our peacekeepers stood their ground. Their courage to stay and hold the line at the most critical time led to the continued fulfillment of UNDOF's mandate as charged by the UN Security Council.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS: THE PHILIPPINE MODEL

Mr. President,

The Post-2015 development agenda also demands that governments address the devastating effects of climate change and natural disasters. My country is among the highest at risk in terms of typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. In terms of disaster management, my government has instituted the cluster model that mobilizes both government and non-government entities from the local to national levels, as well as international partners. The UN has recognized this model as a best practice that other countries can emulate. We will continue to share our knowledge and experience in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery to help other states better manage similar occurrences.

In 2015, we will also actively participate in the World Humanitarian Summit and in the review of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), our blueprint for Disaster Risk Reduction cooperation.

CONCLUSION

Mr. President,

The year 2015 marks an important juncture in the history of nations. This will mark the beginning of a new era of sustainable development, hopefully, one that gives every individual on this planet a better chance at a better quality of life.

This may sound ambitious. This may sound even daunting. Yet, this is a historic time and historic times call for acts of great ambition.

Our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, also recognized the importance of ambition and ideals. He wrote that, "it is a useless life that is not consecrated to a great ideal. It is like a stone washed in the field without becoming part of an edifice."

Mr. President,

Let the Post-2015 Development Agenda be the edifice upon which we will manifest the collective dreams and ideals of humanity.

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