



PHILIPPINES

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ON AGENDA ITEM 135. ON PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET 2020 ON THE REVISED ESTIMATES RESULTING FROM HRC RESOLUTIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED AT ITS FORTIETH TO FORTY-SECOND SESSIONS

**TO BE DELIVERED BY MS. NINA PADILLA CAINGLET
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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PHILIPPINES
13 December 2019, 10 AM**

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have the honor to speak on agenda item 135: Proposed Programme Budget 2020 on the Revised Estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council (HRC) at its fortieth, forty-first and forty-second sessions in Geneva this year.

The Philippines would like to thank Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Controller, Office of the Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Finance and Budget, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General as contained in document A/74/529, as well as Mr. Cihan Terzi, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee as contained in document A/74/7/Add.26.

Mr. Chair,

In the face of the current financial crisis in the UN, we wish to underscore the need to exercise judiciousness and prudence in deploying resources. The UN should ensure that resources are efficiently utilized to address issues that benefit the larger majority of peoples around the world. It is therefore the duty of this Committee to see to it that money is spent on endeavors that are sensible and have the highest potential to make a positive impact on the ground. My delegation commits to work constructively in this important exercise towards this end.

It is in this light that the Philippines takes note of the SG's report on agenda item 135, which states that the estimated resource requirements arising from 65 resolutions adopted by the HRC during the said sessions amount to USD \$67.9 million, and which have been duly included in the programme budget applicable to the biennium 2018-2019 and the year 2020.

Of this amount, USD \$331,300 is being proposed to implement HRC Resolution 41/2, titled "Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Philippines." We further note that USD128,200 has already been allocated to commence operations and ground arrangements.

Mr. Chair,

HRC resolution 41/2 is one such endeavor that merits this Assembly's careful attention to establish whether the allocation of resources to implement its mandate would represent a judicious, prudent and impactful expense. I invite you to consider the following:

1. The resolution was not universally adopted. On the contrary, it was adopted only by a minority of the HRC membership — 18 members, not even half of the Council's total membership. Moreover, almost as many members either voted against the resolution or abstained. Given these figures, the resolution's validity is highly questionable, and clearly does not represent the will of the Council's entire membership.

2. We urge the Member States to evaluate the cost of unilateral country resolution vis-à-vis its impact on the ground and in terms of improved capacities of concerned states. Will it really be constructive and helpful, or only further the politicization of human rights?

3. The resolution calls for a so-called "comprehensive report on the human rights situation in the Philippines." This overbroad scope clearly has no intention of generating an objective assessment of the real situation on the ground, but speaks to the real motive of the authors to name and shame, for which no amount of money will ever be enough. The Assembly should consider carefully on whether it will allow itself to advance the political agenda of a few.

Mr. Chair, because of these reasons, the Philippines rejected this resolution from the moment it was adopted by, I reiterate, a minority of the members of the Council. We cannot, in good conscience, abide by it, as the spirit of the resolution runs counter to the cause of human rights, which we have pledged to uphold and protect when we, along with x other countries, founded the Human Rights Council in 2006, and when we advanced the work towards realizing a Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the 1940s, insisting on strong commitments for justice, dignity and conscience, and the rights of women— a concept almost unheard of then.

As a founding member of the United Nations, the Philippines helped create the UN to honor the universal values of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of state. There is too the value of dialogue which is violated by the high-handed insistence that it be one sided while the other side keeps quiet. In the process that led to the adoption of HRC resolution 41/2, we witnessed the very opposite of these values that hold the UN together. We have seen its mandate "weaponised" for the sake of interests with the evident means to get it done.

Mr. Chair, as a member of the HRC serving its fifth term, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations and the Council. We pledge to engage constructively particularly on this matter to determine the necessity and suitability of the budgetary requirements and resources to implement the resolution, guided by our collective duty to uphold the Council's solemn mandate to respect, protect and fulfill human rights, and rescue it from its misuse. We urge the esteemed delegations to do the same.

I thank you.