



PHILIPPINES

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STATEMENT

by

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On

Agenda Item 83
The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels

before the

Sixth Committee
67th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly

United Nations, New York
09 October 2012

STATEMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Item 83 – The Rule of Law at the National and International Levels

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Amid the embers of war, amid the untold sorrow culminating in 1945, the Charter of the United Nations entered into force, and gave birth to our Organization.

That the UN was founded, and still stands and remains relevant to this day, is probably the greatest achievement of the rule of law at the international level.

Indeed, it is curious why it took us 67 years, until last September 24, to devote just one day to a High Level meeting on the Rule of Law.

Nonetheless, today we feel lucky that it is our generation here at the UN that is seized of this important matter. For the Philippines, we approach the rule of law at the international level from the prism of Article 1, paragraph 1 of the UN Charter, and I quote, “to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace”.

This is the very rationale for the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes, whose 30th anniversary we are commemorating this coming November 15. Dear friends, I take this occasion to request your support for the report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, which endorses the draft resolution commemorating this anniversary.

In this regard, the Philippine Mission, in cooperation with the American Branch of the International Law Association together with the International Law Students Association, is organizing a panel to discuss the continuing relevance of the 1982 Manila Declaration. This will be held at the Fordham University School of Law, in the Upper West Side, on Friday, 26 October 2012, at 3:00 PM sharp. Your invitations to this event are now being sent. We hope that you could join us.

Together with the priority of the President of the General Assembly for bringing about the “adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means” – again drawing inspiration from Article 1, paragraph 1 – the rule of law places the Sixth Committee – our Committee – at the center of the UN’s priorities for the current session.

Mr. Chairman, the Philippines is one with ASEAN in our common commitment to the rule of law. This was eloquently and succinctly outlined earlier by our brother, the Ambassador of Vietnam.

The Philippines also aligns itself with the views of the Non-Aligned Movement as articulated by our dear colleague from Iran.

Iran ably led the NAM in negotiating and adopting the compromise but consensus text of the Outcome Document of our High Level meeting. It is a product of long, careful and hard work by all of us.

For many reasons – from the peaceful settlement of disputes to the role of international tribunals, from anti-terrorism to anti-corruption priorities, from sovereign equality to the equality of women and men – the Philippines reiterates its unequivocal support for this document.

The document speaks to us now, as well as to future generations, as we deal with the great challenges of our time. It recognizes that across the UN system, we have the institutions, the working methods, and the relationships – both within and with outside actors – to make the rule of law relevant to peace and security, to human rights, and to development.

My delegation is ready to work with everyone in finding specific ways and means to further develop linkages between the rule of law and these three UN pillars, as well as to widen stakeholder participation.

Mr. Chairman, the rule of law is an instrument of justice and development, particularly at the national level. This is especially true now at a time of global economic challenges and financial instability. The Philippines also believes that, from an institutional standpoint, the UN plays a key supporting role in encouraging the rule of law at the national level. This is affirmed by paragraph 11 of the outcome document, which acknowledges national ownership of rule of law activities. The UN can further contribute to the progressive development of international law by supporting capacity building, including the exchange of best practices at the national level.

In partnership with Member States, UN and non-UN international actors have done very useful work on good governance, including anti-corruption and the speedy delivery of impartial justice. This perfectly complements the rule of law platform of President Benigno Aquino III, whose leadership is proof positive that the rule of law makes good economic sense. They are the bedrock of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth and development.

Mr. Chairman, the rule of law is ingrained in the very goodness of human nature. We desire orderly and predictable behavioral patterns. But the mystery is why we sometimes suppress that nature, resulting in tragic consequences throughout history.

Without the rule of law, there would be no social order, government, or civilization to speak of. Without the rule of law, there would be no relations between and among countries. There would be no United Nations.

As Secretary of Foreign Affairs Albert del Rosario emphasized in his statement at the General Debate last October 01, the UN was created “to protect the weak from the strong, to provide for the equality of all sovereign states, and to enshrine the rule of law as the governing principle in regulating international disputes”.

This continues to be the Philippines’ vision for the UN, ever since we became a founding member in 1945.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.