



PHILIPPINES

STATEMENT

AGENDA 84

RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAW LEVELS Sixth Committee, 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly

7 October 2022

Trusteeship Council Chamber

Thank you, Madam Chair.

At the outset, we align with the statements of Cambodia on behalf of ASEAN and of Iran on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

We also wish to thank the Secretary-General for the work on the report on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities. The Philippines attaches great importance on the leadership of the United Nations on the rule of law and agrees with the report of that the rule of law is the “foundation of a fair and just society.”

The Philippines reaffirms its adherence to the rule of law, its ideals and principles. We renew our support to the landmark Declaration on the Rule of law at the National and International Levels which was adopted ten (10) years ago noting that its priority elements ranging from the peaceful settlement of disputes to the role of international tribunals, to human rights, anti-terrorism and the equality of men and women, remain as priorities of the UN and the Philippines.

The Philippines has always been a firm believer in the primacy of the rule of law. At the national level, the rule of law goes to the heart of a state. Respect for the rule of law directly impacts the integrity and accountability of a government and marshals justice and development.

In the past year, we amended laws on sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking, reinforcing the Philippines’ commitment to preventing and addressing all forms of violence against women and to secure their empowerment and full access to security and justice. A dedicated office was also created to ensure the safety and security of members of the judiciary, judicial personnel, and court assets enabling them to function independently and impartially in upholding the rule of law and guaranteeing effective, inclusive, and accountable justice and security institutions.

These new and updated laws added to the already robust and comprehensive legal framework of the Philippines on access to justice, consistent with its view on the critical importance of fair, stable, and predictable legal frameworks.

We commend the UN's key supporting role in promoting rule of law in the Philippines and are grateful for its support on capacity-building activities and strengthening rule of law institutions and access to justice initiatives.

As a founder of the United Nations, the Philippines was one of the first architects of the international rights system. This body of nations birthed the foundation of the international law framework—the Charter of the United Nations. Each year, we renew our commitment to the UN and its Charter that enshrines, in the simplest of language, our hopes and aspirations for a progressive, peaceful, and secure world.

Actions that threaten or breach the peace must be condemned and held accountable at the highest terms. Disputes and differences must be settled exclusively by peaceful means, including mediation and arbitration. The 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, which will turn 40 in over a month, articulated that parties to a dispute shall refrain from actions that hinder or prejudice settlement.

We acknowledge the ways by which the UN system – specifically the General Assembly, the Security Council, ICJ, and the Secretary-General himself – can assist in the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

The Philippines continues to advocate for multilateralism and supports acceleration in the conclusion and implementation of multilateral agreements. The Secretary-General's Report notes the Philippine accession to the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961, joining 77 other parties. The accession validates the Philippines' strong and progressive commitment to reducing and eliminating statelessness, as part of our obligations to international human rights instruments and the rule of law. Madam Chair, when we commit to multilateral treaties, we renew our faith in the rule of law to govern proper conduct with respect to each other.

In furtherance of this commitment to multilateralism, in July 2021, the Philippines also launched the *UN Joint Program on Technical Cooperation and Capacity -building for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (2021-2024)* (UNJP) with the UN Resident Coordinator in the Philippines, Gustavo Gonzales.

The UNJP embodies the partnership, trust-building, and constructive engagement between the Philippines and the UN on human rights promotion and protection. It has been welcomed and hailed by States as an innovative model for constructive engagement between a state and the UN system on human rights. It also emphasizes national ownership and inclusivity and integrates the human rights agenda and rule of law in the bigger context of the mandate of the UN development system and the coordinated pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals in country-programs.

Finally, Madam Chair, we support the new vision for the rule of law, noting that indeed access to justice is a core principle. Upholding the rule of law requires equal and fair access of all to the judicial system. The Philippines subscribes that the rule of law is useless if it is only

available to a few. It is, after all, the rule of law, not the rule of the few.

In the first general debate of President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos, Jr., he announced that an “open, inclusive, and rules-based international order that is governed by international law and informed by the principles of equity and of justice” is an important ballast that stabilizes our common vessel.

We look forward to continue working with the UN and other delegations to achieve this aspiration.

Thank you.