

**Keeping the Promise: Realizing the Millennium Development
Goals for Persons with Disabilities towards 2015 and beyond**

Statement delivered

by

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Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

One of the commitments made by the world leaders at the High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals in September of this year is the inclusion of, and accessibility for persons with disabilities in MDG policies and programmes so that they benefit from progress made in achieving the Goals.

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we are reminded to keep the promise.

The theme for this year's commemoration of the International Day *Keeping the Promise: Mainstreaming disability in the Millennium Development Goals towards 2015 and beyond* is particularly significant for my country. The Philippines has expressed concern on previous occasions that while the Member States of the United Nations strive to achieve the 2015 targets of their commitments in the Millennium Development Goals, efforts and strategies to that end may not effectively filter down to persons with disabilities. Even before the recently held Millennium Summit, the Philippines continually and consistently stressed the importance of including the improvement of the plight of persons with disabilities as an integral part in the eight Millennium Development Goals and the need for conscious efforts to mainstream the issue of persons with disabilities in the MDG strategies and mechanisms.

My government, to be sure, is taking steps to ensure that national policies and programmes are inclusive and accessible to all and that the needs of persons with disabilities are taken into consideration and integrated in all aspects of social, political and economic development efforts. Last year, Republic Act No. 10070 otherwise known as *"An Act Establishing an Institutional Mechanism to Ensure the Implementation of Programs and Services for Persons with disabilities in Every Province, City and Municipality, amending Republic Act No. 7277, Otherwise Known as the "Magna Carta for disabled Persons", As Amended, and for Other Purposes"* was enacted into law. Under the law, national agencies and local government units are mandated to implement policies, plans and programs for the promotion of the welfare of persons with disabilities and enter into joint ventures with organizations or associations of persons with disabilities to explore livelihood opportunities and other undertakings that shall enhance the health, physical fitness and the economic and social well beings of PWDs.

National efforts, however, to be truly effective, must be complemented by regional and international efforts and we cannot overemphasize the importance of disability inclusive development cooperation within the framework of bilateral, regional and multilateral initiatives.

It is in this context that the Philippines together with the original co-sponsors and the United Republic of Tanzania presented the resolution entitled *"Realizing the Millennium*

development goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond” which was adopted by consensus last month by the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

Just very briefly, allow me to mention salient points of the resolution: Under the resolution, Governments and United Nations bodies and agencies are called upon to include disability issues and persons with disabilities in reviewing progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and to step up efforts to include in their assessment the extent to which persons with disabilities are able to benefit from efforts to achieve the Goals.

Cognizant that disability is an evolving concept and that development and use of disability statistics in support of inclusive monitoring and evaluation of internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals can best be achieved through committed and collective efforts of all member states and stakeholders, the resolution calls on governments to strengthen the collection and compilation of national and data and information about the situation of persons with disabilities following existing guidelines on disability statistics that are disaggregated by sex and age. The United Nations system is also requested to facilitate technical assistance within existing resources, including the provision of assistance for capacity-building, and for the collection and compilation of national and regional data and statistics

Finally, by the resolution, the Secretary-General is requested by the General Assembly to provide information on the implementation of the resolution at its sixty-sixth session with a view to convening a high-level meeting at the sixty-seventh session on strengthening efforts to ensure accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.

In sum, the resolution, by emphasizing the need for governments and the international community to take concrete action to ensure that persons with disabilities fully participate in all aspects of society and development efforts, takes the promise made by governments at the MDG summit a step closer to our vision of improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

The Philippines will continue to do its utmost to keep the promise alive and on this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, conveys its renewed and firm commitment to the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities particularly within the context of development and realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

Thank you.