

MISYON NG PILIPINAS SA MGA  
NAGKAKAISANG BANSA



PHILIPPINE MISSION TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS

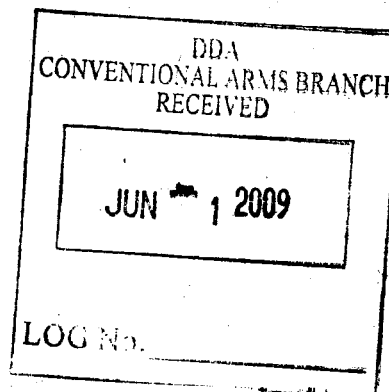
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No. 000360

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (Attn: Office of Disarmament Affairs) and has the honor to forward herewith the Philippine position on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

29 May 2009, New York



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### Philippine Position

The Philippines fully subscribes to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (GDAVD) and thereby shares the view that armed violence does impact negatively on socio-economic development.

The cost of armed violence can be measured in terms of lost lives, social disruption and slowed economic growth. Armed violence has contributed to the impetus for overseas migration, and has reduced foreign direct investment and tourism potential for the Philippines, two of the engines of growth in Southeast Asia. Much of the incidence of armed violence in the Philippines is attributable to conflict with Armed Non-State Actors (NSAs).

The Philippines is an active member of the GDAVD Core Group and also subscribes to the 2007 Bangkok Regional Declaration of the GDAVD. The Philippines supports numerous international, regional and national initiatives which support the GDAVD and its objectives. The Philippines actively promotes the UN Program on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), and coordinates closely with the UN system and fellow Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbors for its regional implementation. Other related international agreements and initiatives are supported by the Philippines, ie on disarmament and non-proliferation, other conventional weapons, arms trade regulation, transnational crime, terrorism, illegal drugs, piracy, etc.

Vigorous law enforcement is fundamental to the Philippine GDAVD approach. A national SALW and arms regulation program is being implemented by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other government agencies. The PNP is currently in the process of reviewing Philippine small laws and regulations and their enforcement, with a view towards more effective curtailment of their illicit manufacture, possession, use and circulation. The PNP is also heavily engaged in combating the nefarious activities of armed criminal groups, which include armed robbery and kidnapping. Community policing, entailing close cooperation between local communities and PNP precincts, is an important mechanism for the reduction of armed violence.

The Philippines supports peace and anti-violence initiatives at all levels of government and across all sectors of society. Many provincial, city and other Local Government Units (LGUs) have declared and enforced violence- and gun- free zones, in cooperation with the uniformed services, civil society and the citizenry at large. Numerous educational institutions and civil society organizations emphasize the goals and objectives of the GDAVD throughout the country, and are instrumental in fostering a culture of non-violence. Inter-faith cooperation and dialogue between and among the Philippines various faith communities also significantly contributes to the process.

The GDAVD perspective is in keeping with the Philippines' Peace Process and Human Rights frameworks. The Philippine Government has pursued peace processes with Separatist and Communist rebel groups since the 1970s, and achieved a major breakthrough in 1996 with the conclusion of a peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Other successes have been achieved with other group factions and numerous individual rebels. Dialogue, reconciliation, and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former rebels form the cornerstones of the Philippine approach. The Philippine Government stresses human rights education for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the PNP, and vigorously prosecutes cases of extra-judicial killings and other abuses of authority.

The Philippines welcomes the GDAVD approach as it provides a new framework and synergy in

tackling armed violence and its impact on development. However, the Philippine Government also realizes that the AVD nexus needs to be addressed in a wholistic fashion which considers social inequality, historical grievances, lack of economic opportunity, un- and under-employment, the impact of natural disasters and other relevant factors. GDAVD should also be seen within the context of achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Furthermore, a normative approach is vital, ergo by educating the citizenry towards a national culture promoting peace and non-violence. Armed violence and under-development can be a vicious cycle, the point is to break the cycle. In terms of promoting the GDAVD, the Philippines values the assistance of developed countries but stresses the importance of South-South Cooperation and "bottom-up" or community-based approaches.

The Philippines stands ready to share its relevant experiences on armed violence reduction, and is preparing to host the 2010 Regional GDAVD Conference for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.