



# PHILIPPINES

*Please Check Against Delivery*

The Philippines in the UN:  
Building Bridges in the 21st Century

Statement to be delivered by

H.E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo  
President of the Republic of the Philippines  
Sixty-Second Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
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Mr. President,

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Congratulations on your election to the UN General Assembly.□

Congratulations also to our Secretary-General, H.E. Ban Ki-Moon, who was such a good friend of the Philippines when he was Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea. We embrace his vow to focus on strengthening the three pillars of the United Nations (development, security and human rights).

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THE UN IS A PILLAR OF DEVELOPMENT.

It plays a major large role for the Philippines. Poverty alleviation is the most important part of our agenda and our vision to lift the Philippines into a modernized nation in twenty years. We want to be actively engaged in local, regional and global affairs because that is the future.

We believe in the power of the global trading system to alleviate poverty and modernize nations through market forces. That does not mean we believe that countries like the Philippines are ready to compete head-to-head today in every sector, but it does mean that we cannot afford to be afraid of globalization.

By being increasingly connected to the world, the Philippine economy has reached a new level of maturity and stability with some of the strongest macroeconomic fundamentals in 20 years.

Six years ago, no one thought we could get more revenues, cut down on tax cheats, strengthen the peso and move the stock market.

And no one thought we could bring our budget into balance, which we did last month, pre-pay our debts and raise employment, but we have.□

We must both grow our economy and sustain our natural environment at the same time. We are developing and promoting our Green Philippines agenda. It emphasizes a sustainable economic model that brings economic opportunity and a concern for our environment.

At the Secretary General\_s High Level Meeting on Climate Change earlier this week, UN member nations focused on what the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol meetings in Bali this December should do.

The Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol has allowed developing countries like the Philippines to voluntarily reduce their greenhouse gas emissions through private sector initiatives. But there is a need to expand the carbon market and to expand international cooperation and financial support to promote strategies to adapt to climate change.

Too many nations, developed and developing, believe the environment must be sacrificed at the altar of growth.

We believe otherwise.

□We believe that we have a unique opportunity to get it right from day one: to introduce

new industries that are clean and profitable.

□ This includes a bio fuels industry that helps our energy independence, creates jobs and keeps our nation clean for future generations.

We are further developing our geothermal power which is one of the two largest in the world.

We reiterate our commitment to the global trading system and when that fails us, to strengthening ASEAN, APEC and regional relations to bolster our economy.

The multilateral trading system, through the Doha Round, remains the best option to address poverty and improve standards of living around the world through an agreed set of international trade rules.

The Doha Development Agenda was launched with an emphasis on integrating a developmental dimension into all elements of the negotiations.

To make the Doha Round truly a Development Round, there must be greater coherence of policies among international development institutions (e.g. World Bank, IMF, UNDP and WTO) so that trade is mainstreamed in the development agenda and therefore capacity building can be focused on trade competitiveness.

As part of capacity-building, we call on the UN and our partners among developed nations to strengthen South-South cooperation wherein developing nations with specific strengths can share with other developing nations in need of their strength, funded by developed nations or multilaterals like the UNDP. □

The developed nations were the prime movers behind global trade when it suited them; now some countries are slowing things down. That is not right nor good for our respective economies.

There has been a ray of hope with the developed countries declaring that they are willing to maximize flexibilities, in exchange for greater market access.

On the sidelines of the UN session, we hope the contending countries can continue consulting to find the right formula of subsidy cuts and market access that will break the Doha impasse.

But let me be clear: even as the Philippines works tirelessly to move the talks forward, we are not going to stand by and do nothing. For us, it is full speed ahead, preferably with Doha, but full speed nevertheless.

We recognize that if the multilateral trading system is fragmented into trading blocs, it will result in a more complex set of trade rules. That could be incompatible and detrimental to the interests of developing countries. In the meantime, while we are hoping for a successful conclusion to the Doha Round, we have to maximize the economic opportunities provided under bilateral and regional free trade agreements. This will complement efforts under the multilateral trading system.

At a time of uncertainty when the Doha Round is faltering, ASEAN took a bold step forward by drafting its Charter.

This is our first step to creating a permanent sense of security.

We are working towards a single market with free movement of goods, ideas and skilled talent.

In APEC, the world's largest economy, the United States, and the world's fastest growing economy, China, are active participants.

We have a strong alliance with the US, who remains our largest trading partner as well as our strongest strategic ally. We have stood shoulder to shoulder for many generations. We expect to continue building on our mature relationship with the US.

We have also forged a strong relationship with China. We see China's rise as a significant opportunity for the Philippines. Our overall relations are now more confident and comprehensive. □

Relations are not just about trade. They are also about people. And this includes migration, a world-side reality. □

We thank the Secretary General for supporting the Philippine hosting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development next year, to which we invite all Member States to participate.

Overseas Filipino Workers are honored by the government and the people for their sacrifice and dedication to their work, their family and their nation. We welcome their contribution. But we are working towards the day when Filipinos no longer need to go abroad for a job, the day that overseas work is just another career option.

We believe that our ambitious economic reforms will increasingly be keeping our best and brightest right in the Philippines, closer to friends and families, helping to build our communities and provide the next generation of leadership.

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**THE UN IS A PILLAR OF SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS.**

It remains the central pillar underpinning conflict resolution.

Our country is among the largest, if not the largest, contributor of police officers to UN peacekeeping missions. □

The Philippines has peacekeepers, both police and military, in Afghanistan , Cote D'Ivoire, Georgia , Haiti , Kosovo , Liberia , Sudan and Timor Leste.

We will continue our participation to safeguard communities so that they may overcome conflict and regain the peace needed to pursue development.

Closer to home, I have personally advanced the process of peace in Muslim and Christian Mindanao to a new level of engagement, focused on interfaith dialogue, economic development and mutual security. We have done so with the largest possible international involvement, including the UN. Peace there is very much an issue of human rights, just as alleviating poverty is, which is our number one issue. □

The Philippines is the most democratic country in our region. We have no tolerance for human rights violations at home or abroad.

We support the effort to revitalize and refocus the work of the U.N. in human rights. □ It is for this reason that the Philippines sought and won a seat in the Human Rights Council. □ The attention of the international community has been drawn, with great reason and justification, to the current situation in Myanmar.

Ladies and gentlemen:

This the time for Myanmar to return to the path of democracy and to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi – now – and to involve all the parties including the National League for Democracy in the democratization and the constitutional process.

IN CONCLUSION

Mr. President.

The number of globe-size issues we will face in the 21st century will require globe-size cooperation. We must build bridges of peace and prosperity. The place to start is building a stronger United Nations.